The Public Sphere of Birds

Volume 1

Colonial American Newspapers

1713 to 1776

The Public Sphere of Birds. Vol. 1. Colonial American Newspapers. 1713 to 1776

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Volume 1

Introduction.

Around fifteen years ago I started a blog titled "Winged Wardens" designed to trace the history of bird protection discourse in agricultural periodicals in the United States. The main argument of the project was that the bird protection movement in the United States did not begin with the Audubon organization(s) of the late 1800s but could be traced to the early days of the republic, propelled by agricultural concerns, natural historians, and bird-friendly editors, such as Thomas Green Fessenden of the *New England Farmer* (see Judd 1997; Oehlkers 2017). This early movement culminated in state-level bird protection legislation but it was not successful in stopping market hunters from slaughtering birds nationwide (see Smalley 2022). Nevertheless, the well-worn themes of that movement informed the more successful Audubon movement at the turn of the century.

After I made my final Winged Wardens post in 2017, I began to wonder if I had been too narrow in limiting my search to agricultural periodicals. What about general newspapers? I subscribed to two commercial newspaper databases (newspapers.com and genealogybank.com) and began exploring. As I suspected, while agricultural periodicals had been important drivers of bird protection, they were not the whole story. The earliest article advocating bird protection that I could find in an American publication appeared in 1749 in a general newspaper, the *Boston Evening Post* (see Oehlkers 2025).

I began a simple, systematic investigation. Entering the search terms "bird" and "birds," into both commercial newspaper databases, I sifted the results, year by year, month by month, and finally, when I reached the 1860s, day by day, for meaningful mentions of birds. I copied the relevant texts into documents, finally ending in the summer of 2025 having made it to the end of 1869. This end point was for practical reasons. My document for 1869 alone tallied over 300,000 words. It was time to stop collecting. But what to do with what I had found?

I have spun some of the collection into individual articles (Oehlkers 2025a, Oehlkers 2025b) and plan to write more of them. Meanwhile, I thought it would be good to share what I found in its more-or-less raw form, which explains this volume and the rest to come. There has been much written about the history of books and periodicals related to birds; the digitization of the newspaper archive has opened new possibilities for investigation.

So why the title, "The Public Sphere of Birds," instead of something more literal like "A Collection of Articles about Birds Found in American Newspapers?" This is partially because of the nature of newspapers during the time period covered by this project, which operated more like the forums for discussion and commentary described by Habermas (1989) than later forms of mass media. Newspaper publishers, hungry for content, eagerly invited correspondence in their pages, as well as clipping material

from books and periodicals. Individual newspapers were embedded in exchange networks so publishers and editors read other newspapers, criticized and debated what they found, or simply copied things, often without credit. This project represents the part of that public sphere concerned with birds, particularly discourse about birds in relation to humans.

But there is another reason for the title. Birds have been figured as part of the functioning of the public sphere itself. Birds throughout human history and across cultures, have been considered as having a special relationship to media, language and communication. They sing in public. Some species are literal messengers. Some species can speak like humans. They comprise allegorical congresses, debate each other in fables. They have a direct line to the Creator. And in American newspapers, birds engaged in political discourse, both metaphorically (parrots, "mock birds" and gulls) and dramatically ("Mother Carey's Chickens" warning about Federalist conspiracies in the 1790s, Bobolinks spouting campaign jargon in the 1840s). While my own thoughts about *this* "public sphere of birds" are still developing, I invite the reader to pay special attention to this side of things.

While the amount of material collected these volumes is large and diverse, it should not be considered representative of all bird-related articles in the American press during the period covered. There are technological limitations including newspaper availability, newspaper reproduction quality, OCR accuracy, and keyword registration. Selection was also affected by questions that arose during the search process, including: the evolution of bird protection discourse; the role of external influences, particularly British ones; sociability between humans and birds; the impact of 18th century-style "sensibility" on attitudes towards birds; and so forth, at the expense of other things, such as ornithological species accounts. I also gave myself license to pursue bird references into books and periodicals when such publications were cited in newspapers; this material is discussed in endnotes.

The first volume, which covers the colonial period (articles from 1713 to 1776), will be the shortest of the volumes published, even though it covers the longest span of time. There were not that many newspapers and bird references were somewhat uncommon. Nevertheless, there are some items and topics of particular significance that I want to highlight.

Symbolic birds

The very first search result chronologically was an article from 1713 about a canonization ceremony that featured a caged bird release. Birds have symbolic value, especially in religious contexts. The specific trope of the bird released (or not released) from its cage will be seen over and over in this project, sometimes referring to the soul released from a body; others, the political prisoner released from prison; and still others, the enslaved person released from bondage. This was an era that featured widespread commerce in wild birds for the caged bird trade, so this trope was based in experienced reality.

Interest in birds was influenced by the Christian cosmology that dominated during

the time. To study natural history was to read the "Book of Nature" and draw closer to the Creator. Birdsong was viewed as both a gift to cheer the working farmer and a reminder for humans to offer praise. Birds were important elements in visions of paradise, including imagery rooted in Islamic traditions.

Correspondents frequently contributed bird-themed poetry to colonial newspapers, reflecting an era where American culture remained an extension of British culture (Clark, 1994). Consequently, these poems—even the original American ones—typically featured British species like nightingales, larks, and blackbirds. The notable exceptions were Richard Lewis's, "A Journey from Patapsco to Annapolis" and "Food for Criticks," both published in multiple newspapers in 1731. While Lewis still referenced the "Philomel" (nightingale), he expanded his "plumy people" to include New World species like the mockingbird and hummingbird. In his follow-up, he introduced the bluebird and 'mimick thrash' (brown thrasher).

I should note here the special significance of the mockingbird in bird-related newspaper discourse during the whole period covered by this project. Among other things, it was an emblem of the American South, a metaphor for a certain kind of imitative writer, and a popular, and valuable, caged bird, both in America and Europe.

The 18th century also featured the rise of "sensibility" in British American culture (Burstein, 1999). This would influence bird-related poetry and storytelling. While this volume includes at least one classic example of sentimental verse—an elegy to a dead pet bird—the impact of sensibility in American newspaper bird poetry will be seen more acutely in the next few volumes. This will have important effects on subsequent debates about bird protection; advocates will be often accused of operating out of "poetic sentimentality" rather than grounded, economic common-sense.

Useful birds

The next search item, a short passage about the importance of protecting hemp crops from birds, points to a general perception that birds, even small songbirds, were agricultural pests. There were non-lethal solutions, but when it came to crows and blackbirds many communities employed bounties to reduce the numbers of the putatively harmful species. At the same time, there was a growing understanding that there was a useful side to birds when it came to insect control, dramatically demonstrated during insect plagues.

The most fully articulated article in this respect is the 1749 article in the *Boston Evening Post*, mentioned earlier, in which the author blamed bounties on blackbirds for the insect infestations that destroyed hay crops. This article, or like-minded opinion, influenced Benjamin Franklin, who passed the story to Linnaeus's students, and it became an enduring and widely shared tale in their publications about the unintended consequences of bird destruction. This was the first American newspaper "spare the birds" story of hundreds to come.

While bounties were one cause of the reduction of useful bird numbers, the author of the 1749 article also pointed to habitat destruction and wanton bird shooting by boys. Hunting in the colonies was not encumbered by the discriminatory game laws

of England and France, but this had created another set of problems. Certain species, such as wild turkeys and heath hens, were already under pressure early in the century. Boys with guns indiscriminately firing at birds within city limits became a public safety issue. And gunners after game birds caused enough agricultural damage that landowners began posting no-hunting notices. Meanwhile, sportsmen were sheltering bobwhite quail during harsh winters to preserve their numbers.

While some of the shooting was recreational, it was also for the marketplace. Game birds (including ducks, turkeys, and shorebirds) as well as wild (passenger) pigeons dominated but there was also a market for "small birds," such as American robins. The "rice bird" (bobolink) was particularly favored as a delicacy comparable to the ortolan bunting.

During this period, opinions aligned with the British anti-cruelty movement began appearing in American newspapers, including Alexander Pope's "Against Barbarity to Animals" (1713), which was excerpted without credit in *The Massachusetts Gazette* in 1772. Pope pointed to existing cultural prohibitions against killing swallows, based in superstition, and robins, based in the sentimental tale, Babes in the Woods, as providing models for how to persuade the public. The category of the "sacred bird," while often reported as a cross-cultural curiosity, had potential local applications.

Rhetorical birds

Reports in 1721 about prisoners convicted of "contempts against the king," introduces a more sinister aspect to avian symbolism and the "public sphere of birds." In sentencing the prisoners, the judge cited Ecclesiastes 10:20: "Curse not the King, no not in thy thoughts; for the birds of the air will reveal the secret, and that which hath wings will utter the voice." Birds had the apparent power to make private matters public, like journalists (or spies).

It is no coincidence that the fable was a common form of newspaper content during this era; it was explicitly identified by some correspondents as a strategy against censorship. Many of these fables, meanwhile, featured talking birds in rhetorical settings, such as debate or persuasion. Sometimes, this kind of storytelling shaded into speculation about metempsychosis, in which bird species and human qualities became one and the same.

The ancient story of Psapho, who trained his birds to say "Psapho is a great god," and thus gained an unmerited reputation, made its first of many American newspaper appearances, as a commentary on mediated communication and publicity. Reports of a bird that circled Philadelphia in 1759 screaming "Repent! Repent!" suggest that, like Romans, some people were still looking to birds for divine messages, though in this case, responded by shooting at it....

News-worthy birds

Finally, this project collects miscellaneous stories driven by a variety of news values, many of them based around some kind of curiosity of natural history, such as birds' sensitivity to plagues, or swallow hibernation (a persistent myth reported as true),

or herons found with rings from previous hunters attached to their legs.

Bird hunts with exceptional numbers of casualties were considered newsworthy. This would be a staple of rural newspaper content for decades to come. Stories of the human casualties of bird-shooting were also reported in great numbers, the more lurid and tragic the better. I've included many such stories in this collection and will warn the reader that some of these stories, particularly ones involving young family members, are hard to shake. Note that the bird shooting "accident" was widely considered a possible mask for suicide, so some news stories were published after inquests to clear accident victims of this suspicion.

The plan for each volume is straight-forward: a collection of bird related-articles (including verse, fiction and advertising) listed in chronological order. Items largely about birds or bird-relevant topics are included in full; items that mention birds but are not mainly about birds are included in edited form. Each item header includes the name of the publication the item appeared in, the state in which the publication was based, the date of publication, the page number, and when available, the headline and/or author. I've also indicated in brackets the original source of the text and made a note in cases where item was widely circulated or uncredited. I have used endnotes for additional commentary.

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1713

The Boston News-Letter (MA) 1713 03 16 page 1 Rome May 7, 1712

Some Days ago the Pope held a Publick Consistory about the Canonization of 3 new Saints…The Pope Celebrates the Mass, and when they come to the Offertory, the Dean of the Sacred College, or the most ancient of the Cardinal Bishops, presents to the Pope two Loaves, a little Barrel of Wine, 3 large Candles, 2 Turtle Doves, and some other "birds in two cages of Silver Wires, which the Pope opens, and having taken out two of those Birds, he gives them Liberty to fly away, while the other remains Captives in their Cages, which represent the Limbo and Purgatory, the Pontiff intending by this Ceremony to signify that he delivers from thence such as he pleases to introduce into Heaven with the Saints, of whom he has made the Canonization, which he concludes with this odd and mysterious Ceremony[1].

1720

The Boston News-Letter (MA) 1720 03 17 postscript page 1 Rules for Raising and Making Hemp

...Great care must be taken to preserve the seed by flaps or otherwise from the birds, and must be weeded if required....

1721

The American Weekly Mercury (PA) 1721 03 23 page 1

Judge of the Admiralty of the Province, after many repeated importunities of his friends, to print this speech be delivered, when he gave judgement against two persons, who were tried before him for contempts against the king, has at last been prevailed upon to order the Register to send us a copy, as follows:

You, the prisoners at the bar, stand convicted, on by a sorrowful confession, the other by plenary evidence, of contempts against his Sacred Majesty King George….

And as the Majesty of the Prince is violated in the affront of the meanest person who acts by his authority, so your life for some years past may be justly said to be one contented contempt against the King, and to the offense of speaking scandalous and contemptuous words of him, you have added the sin of cursing him. I heartily with the sentence I now pass may have a good effect upon you; I do adjudicate and decree, that you, — —, shall stand in the pillory in the market-place, for the space of two hours on two market days; that afterwards on the said days you shall be tied to the tail of a cart, and be drawn round two of this city squares, and then you shall be whipped on your bare back with forty one lashes, and be imprisoned till you have paid the charge of this prosecution. I shall conclude what I have said to you with the advice of the wisest of men, curse not the King, no not in thy thoughts; for the birds of the air will reveal the secret, and that which hath wings will utter the voice....

The Boston News-Letter (MA) 1721 07 10 page 2 Review of *A Short Discourse Concerning Pestilential Contagion and the Methods to be used to Prevent it* by Richard Mead

...In the second part, Dr. Mead proposes some methods to prevent contagion, as follows: As it is a satisfaction to know, that the plague is not a native of our country, so this is likewise an encouragement to the utmost diligence in finding out means to keep ourselves clear from it…But the greatest danger is from such goods, as are apt to retain infection…Unless there could be a way found out, without hazarding men's lives, of trying when bodies have done emitting the noxious fumes, which possibly might be done emitting the noxious fumes, which possibly might be done, by putting tender animals near to them, particularly by setting little birds upon the exposed goods; because it has been observed in times of the plague, that the country has been forsaken by the birds; and those kept in houses, have many of them died. But the use of this fancy experience only must show; for I am well aware, that all plagues do no indifferently affect all kinds of living creatures; on the contrary, most are confined to a particular species of them; like the disease of the black cattle, a few years since, which neither proved infectious to other brutes, nor to men....

1722

The New-England Courant (MA) 1722 07 16 page 2 To the Author of the *New-England Courant*

What shall we say of those men, who according to the rules of reason and justice, and also by a particular oath, which they have solemnly entered into are obliged to take care of the welfare of others, and yet designedly, nay more, under a show of justice, injure and oppress them?…Then, like the sheep in our fable, we may cry out aloud for help, and oppose with all our might against the treacherous watchdog….

The third sort of men described to us in this fable are those who love not other so well as themselves…that whenever any misunderstandings or troubles arise among their fellow countrymen, or that they are attacked by a foreign enemy, they publicly declare that they will not concern themselves therein, but will continue neuter, without declaring or acting on either side, and these are truly the flitter-mice, who, as their own private ease and interest seem to require, will sometimes be mice and sometimes birds, and indeed are neither of the two[2]….

The New-England Courant (MA) 1722 07 23 page 1 To the Author of *the New-England Courant* by "Philander."

Sir, if I should keep up a correspondence with you I should rather choose to send you some pieces out of received and approved authors than any of my own; for what has been published by others and past the test without offense, will keep you and I clear of danger…

There was a country fellow at work a sowing his grain, and a swallow, being a bird famous for Providence and foresight, called a company of little birds about her, and

bade them take notice what that fellow was doing. You must know (says the swallow) that all the fowlers' nets and snares are made of hemp and flax, and that's the seed he is now a sowing; pick it up in time, for fear what may come on it. In short, they put it off till it took root, and then again till it was sprung up into the blade. Upon this the swallow told them once for all, that it was not yet too late to prevent the mischief, if they did but bestir themselves, and set heartly about it; but finding no heed was given to what she said, she e'en bid adieu to her old companions in the woods, and so betook her self to a private Life, and to the conversation of men. This flax and hemp came in time to be gathered and wrought, and it was the swallow's fortune to see several of the very same birds that the forewarned taken in the nets, made of the same stuff she told them of. They came at last to be sensible of the folly of slipping the opportunity, but they were lost beyond all redemption first.

Good counsel, as Sir Roger L'estrange observes, is cast away upon the arrogant, the self-conceited, or the stupid, who are either too proud to take it, or too heavy to understand it.[3]

1723

The New-England Courant (MA) 1723 07 22 page 2 Foreign Affairs

Vienna, May 13. N.S. The Court being a heron-hunting the other day, one of these birds was taken, with a ring about his leg, upon which was engraved, Ferdinand III. Anno 1651. The Emperor having changed the ring, and put one about his leg, with Charles VI. Anno 1723. engraved on it, ordered that they should let him fly.

The New-England Courant (MA) 1723 12 09 page 1 Few Happy Matches by Mr. [Isaac] Watts, contributed by Anthony Vainlove. (Widely printed)

…VIII.

Nor let the cruel Fetters bind
A gentle to a savage mind;
  For love abhors the sight.
Loose the fierce tyger from the deer,
For native rage and native fear
  Rise and forbid delight.

IX.

Two kindest souls alone must meet;
'Tis friendship makes the bondage sweet,
  And feeds their mutual loves:
Bright Venus on her rolling throne
Is drawn by gentlest birds alone,
  And Cupid's yoke the doves.

1724

The American Weekly Mercury (PA) 1724 01 21 page 1 Untitled article by "Lovina"

..How dull will be the day, if I marry the old sire! the light of the sun will be tedious to me. When we are with a person we like, the most trifling objects can afford delight, but with him we hate, the groves have no pleasure, and the gentle voice of birds is nothing agreeable…

The Boston News-Letter (MA) 1724 10 22 page 2 Newcastle, July 12.

We have a surprising account from Appleby of a certain farmer in the Parish of Middleton in the Bishoprick of Durham, who having a good stock of old hay, his neighbours, who greatly wanted it, very strongly importuned him to sell the same at a good price, which was often offered; but he gave for an answer that neither love nor money should purchase it. It happen'd in the beginning of June last, that a prodigious number of caterpillars, of an uncommon size, appeared on his ground, and soon destroyed all the grass upon it, and what was more remarkable not one of them was to be seen in the neighbouring pastures. The ground where the grass was destroyed being bare like a common road, and the caterpillars being exposed to the birds of prey, a flight of crows perch'd among them, and in a little time put an end to all the vermin, and the neighbouring people's fears happily ended with them.

1725

The New-England Courant (MA) 1725 06 14 page 1 From the Saturday's Post, January 16, 1725.

…it is a rule generally observed that whoever goes in at the Gate of Joy comes out at that of Sorrow…The birds of happy omen have saluted their mornings with their sweetest accents, while their evenings have been troubled with the lamentable shrieks of the ill-fated fowl…

1726

The Boston News-Letter (MA) 1726 02 24 page 2 Berlin, (in Germany,) Sept. 8.

The King of Prussia continues to hunt partridges at Wusterhausen, which sport the fair weather favors to such a degree, that he kills 100 brace of those birds almost every day, which he gives away for the most part to his chief ministers and generals.

1727

The Boston Gazette (MA) 1727 01 02 page 1 Constantinople, August 20 [From a British Journal] (widely printed)

We are here in the utmost confusion, as well by season of the plague which

desolates the city, as on account of the ill news from Persia…the air is thereby so much infected that the birds drop down dead, and the turtle doves, which abounded in every part of this city, are retired elsewhere….

The Weekly News-Letter (MA) 1727 03 16 page 2 Affairs of the Austrian Netherlands [*British Journal*, October 1]

Brussels, Sept. 26....Our most serene Archduchess has now revived the Office of Great Falconry, and rendered it more splendid than it was formerly; for which purpose she has chosen M. Bartho. Verhoeven Master-Falconer, who had served the Emperor for many Years, and has sent him to Campent, there to buy a complete set of the birds necessary for that sport, and which are shortly expected there from Norway. He has already received a sum of money to purchase them by the direction of the Chevalier Rorive, who in quality of Lieutenant of the Great Falconry, will officiate as Great Falconer-General, a place vacant ever since 1693. Everything is to be ready against next March, when her most serene Highness will have this diversion in its utmost extent....

The New-England Weekly Journal (MA) 1727 04 10 page 1 No. 1. by "E."

...An ingenious author has observed, that a reader seldom peruses a book with pleasure, 'till he has a tolerable notion of the physiognomy of the author, the year of his birth & his manner of living, with several other particulars of the like nature, very necessary to the right understanding his works. This humor I find not a little remarkable in my own countrymen, who, since the advertisement which I lately published, have been very busy in their conjectures at my name, the place of my abode & my circumstances of life. Many have supposed me to be a certain young gentlemen, who has given the town several beautiful pieces of poetry: though others say I am lately arrived from England, accomplished in mathematical learning. I have been frequently reported to wear a band, and as often represented as a merchant, wrapt up in a Callaminco Night-Gown, and seated very conveniently in a Compting House. Sometimes I have been dispatched to Cambridge under form of a scholar, while some have not scrupled to divest me of all these my dignities, and clap me into the habit of an Old Almanack-Maker.

To rectify the judgment of my readers in this important matter, and to sooth the curiosity of these inquisitive gentlemen, I shall here give them a brief account of my self, without prejudice or partiality. I was born in the Year 1666, in a small cottage at Salem, which is the principal reason, as I have been apt to imagine, that people have sometimes suspected me for a conjurer: Though when I have often examined myself in that particular, I have thought, as far as I know my own heart, that I have looked like another Christian. But as this is a case of conscience, fitter to be decided by divines and others skilled in those affairs, than by me who am but a simple layman, I shall refer it to their consideration, and at present dismiss it. However, I may possibly in the course of this work, from time to time, offer to the world, such reasons as incline me to the negative side of the question, that I am no wizard: but that being only my own private opinion, I shall not presume to palm it upon others.

The most remarkable passage of my childhood, was, a wonderful talent I had, to imitate any thing that I saw or heard. I could grunt like a hog, roar like a lion, or bellow like a bull. I was once very near being worried by a pack of rascally dogs, who took me for a fox, I deceived their ears with so natural a squeal: And I was a particular favourite of all the hens in the neighbourhood, I rivaled the cock with a crow so very exquisite & inimitable. I will add, for the satisfaction and emolument of my enemies, that when I hoot, they would infallibly take me for an owl; as also upon occasion, I can bray so very advantageously, that few asses can go beyond me.

Nay to such a perfection am I arrived in the art of mimickry, that I am able not only to take any sound that I hear, but I have a faculty of looking like any body I think fit. There is no person that ever I have seen but I can immediately throw all his features into my face, assume his air, & monopolize his whole countenance. I remember, when I was a school-boy, my master once gave me an unlucky rap on my pate, for a fault committed by Giles Horror, whose visage I had at that time unfortunately put on. Esau Absent may remember me to this day, if he be living, how his own mother took me for him, when I marched off in triumph, with a huge lunch of bread & butter, that was just spread for Esau's dinner. I am the more large on this part of my character, because it is in a great measure, the ground-work of these lucubrations, inasmuch as I intend frequently to write in quality of an imitator. My way of bantering a folly shall be to represent it as in a glass, and I shall make it ridiculous by exposing it just as it is. If I criticize upon any incorrect performances, my readers must not wonder if my criticism is incorrect: As on the other hand, if I have occasion to commend any beautiful or sublime production, I shall endeavour to write in the spirit of such an author. Tho' as to this last Point, I must acknowledge, I am very much afraid I shall fail: For to confess a secret which I desire may go no further, I find I can with much more ease & facility, tread in the steps of a grub street or a bombastic writer, then of one whose compositions are finished with purity and eloquence. I own it is a considerable grief to me, when I reflect how much more able I am to follow people in their infirmities than in their good examples; and with what dexterity I can write improbabilities & contradictions, when am obliged to take such pains to attain to any tolerable degree of propriety & exactness. This reduces my capacity for imitation to the uncomfortable diminution of apishness & buffoonery; so that I have often with great shame of heart, secretly compared my self to a monkey. Those who have given us accounts of the East-Indies, tell us of a certain bird there, which its fellow-inhabitants call the Mock-Bird[4]. This Gentleman in Feathers, is remarkable for having no note of his own, but is beholden to every sound he hears for his accent. The rustling of the leaves on the trees, the rilling of the brooks, the noise of the several beasts, the songs of other birds, or the words of men, are alike to him; and he repeats them all with equal nicety and art. I cannot but look upon my self, as having a remote affinity to that bird, in that I can pretend to no fund of good sense in my own mind, but must be obliged perpetually to one author or another for patterns to copy after or else I must be contented to hold my tongue….

The New-England Weekly Journal (MA) 1727 09 18 page 1 The Meditation of Cassim the Son of Ahmed

"I was a few nights ago, walking over the hills in the western and unfrequented paths of the city Lima...While I was in the midst of this Soliloquy, and as my thoughts fixed, and grew warmer by degrees, a philosophical thought started to me, which I did not find easy to answer. How, said I to myself, can the spirits in Paradise, stript of the humane body, taste the delights of those soft and indulgent climates?...Can they see the verdure of the hills and the flourish of the fields, when they have left their mortal eyes behind them? Or can they, without the ears of the body, be ravished with the consort of warbling birds, rilling streams and bubbling fountains?..."

1728

The Boston Gazette (MA) 1728 08 19 page 2 Berlin, May 24.

...The 28th, his Polish Majesty is to dine in his apartment, and, in the afternoon, to take the diversion of shooting birds, and in the evening, to sup in the Red Hall….

The Weekly News-Letter (MA) 1728 11 14 page 1 Portsmouth, Aug 28. [*St. James's Evening Post* Aug 31]

Last Thursday, a miller about half a mile from Gosport, having shot some sea birds, went on the mud to get them, but sunk in or stuck in such a manner that the tide came over him and the fatal accident was not known till the morning following, upon the ebbing of the water.

1729

The New-England Weekly Journal (MA) 1729 03 10 page 1

...Mr. Addison has given us a chain of entertaining thoughts upon the instinct of animals in the *Spectators* No. 120 and no. 121. As I was reading these papers over, I was led to think that instinct was not confined to the lowest orders of beings, but might perhaps take place in human creatures in many cases….

We have no sure way of judging at all, if like effects ought not to be ascribed to like causes; and of consequence, if we allow that there is such a thing as instinct that governs the beasts, birds, fishes, reptiles and insects, in the pursuit of the necessaries and conveniences of life, we must confess we our selves are under the influence of it. We need not be at all ashamed of this confession; for what we do from an original impulse in our frame, in that degree only which nature dictates, does by no means make the worst, or most despicable figure, compared with the rest of our conduct....

The New-England Weekly Journal (MA) 1729 05 19 page 2 A Cage for the Robin [from an English paper]

We are inform'd by ancient writers, that there was a nobleman in the west, that among'st several things that he kept for his use, he admir'd nothing so much as a poor bird, called a robin; therefore he plac'd him at the highest beam of the hall, above all other birds; his sweet harmonious notes so charmed his master's ear, tho' other birds

were oftentimes pecking, nothing could make his Master discard poor Robin: So highly he gain'd his master's favour, tho' other birds would whistle, talk, and sing, as well as he, yet, no note would please so well this old gentleman as Robin.

But, now observe the turns of Fate, Death calling the old gentleman aside, this bird began to droop his wings for the loss of so good a master, and for fear he should be moved from the highest beam above all other birds of the air, to be company for rooks, jack-daws, & chattering magpies, such as fly about any end or court, he having been so many years among the best of birds; but, fortune running still on robin's side, that by his charming notes, he soon gained the bars of his young master, who soon gave him applause above all other birds, for some of them of greater notes he discarded: but still admired little Robin, who used all his art and skill to recompense his master's favours, by straining his throat, and nimbly fluttering about his golden cage, wherein he hung, and biting daily the golden wire with his pretty little bill and making holes, which his good master perceiving, ordered a cage of a mighty circumference, with stronger golden wire than ever for fear of loosing pretty Robin, which the other birds perceiving began to echo out their voice; but cunning Robin knew too well how to baffle them: and fell to his old trade of biting the golden wire which was in his reach. But let him do what he would it was pleasing in his master's sight, which made Robin grow proud and haughty, and began to drown the voices of all the other birds when they began to sing.

But, at length a parcel of new birds being presented to his master, Robin began to grow surly, (which displeased his Master,) that seeing the new birds should be more pleasing in a strange hall, than he, who had been so fed and nourished in the same place.

Then the Master began to call upon Robin for some of his former notes, but Robin still sat surly, which mightily surprised his master that he could not get one note or chirrup, and sat waiting so long on him whom his dear Father had kept, he was resolved to wring his neck off: But, the Hartfordshire starling echoed out his voice, and call'd a council for Robin.

The next morning being come, his Master came into the hall, and, began to look over his birds, the new birds began to sing, but still Robin was very surly, which so enraged his good Master that he resolv'd to take him out of his fine golden cage, and put him into an iron one.

1730

The New-England Weekly Journal (MA) 1730 03 30 The Night-Birds and the Sun. A Fable. (reprinted in other papers)

In a thick shade, the Owl, the Bat,
And other Night-Birds met to chat;
They rail'd, like Ladies o'er their Tea,
And nothing pass'd from censure free.
  Amongst a thousand Things, at last,
Reflections on the Sun were cast:

He was offensive to the Sight,
A busy and impert'nent Light.
Phoebus o'erhears, and thro' the Trees
A Whisper runs ------ "With how much ease
Can I destroy you, if I please!
With One bright Beam, One piercing Ray,
Make you dissolve, like wax, away!
  The Pow'r is Mine, but not the Will;
Indulge your Folly; rail on still.
But know when you are dead and gone,
I still shall please, shall still shine on.

The Application.
Envy should never give us Pain;
The best Resentment is Disdain.

The Weekly News-Letter (MA) 1730 08 06 page 1 An Essay upon the Life of a Gentleman [*London Journal*, May 16, 1730]

...Our gentleman should carefully read Nature, and swell his mind with just and great ideas of her wondrous art; so will he be able to judge aright of all the imitations of nature, by sculpture, statuary, painting, tapestry, and other achievements of human wisdom: he will be enabled to build for ease, conveniency, elegance and magnificence; and diversify his gardens with hills, valleys, rocks, rivers, streams, fruits, flowers, shades and fountains; which beautiful variety, with the music of birds, usually attending those places, join together, to make them so many terrestrial Paradises....

1731

The Pennsylvania Gazette 1731 01 19 page 1 The Thresher's Labour by Stephen Duck

The grateful tribute of these rural lays,
Which to her patron's hand the muse conveys
...
Alas! That human joys should change so soon,
Even this may bear another face at noon!
The birds salute us as to work we go,
And a new life seems in our breasts to glow
...

The Pennsylvania Gazette 1731 05 20 page 1 A Journey from Patapsco to Annapolis by Richard Lewis[5]

We are confident that none who are lovers of poetry will be displeased to find this week's paper almost wholly taken up with the following beautiful piece. It is an agreeable description of the spring in these parts of America; the publication of

which the author modestly declined to allow till another season; but his friends were of opinion, that so excellent a picture would suffer no disadvantage by an immediate comparison with the original. The religious turn given the whole, is suitable to the ancient use and first designed verse; the Muse being then only well and rightly employed when she excites to piety and virtue.

...

The birds delighted to the grove repair
On every tree behold a tuneful throng
The vocal valleys echo to their song
  But what is *he, who perch'd above the rest [*Mockingbird]
Pours out such various music from his breast!
His breast, whose plumes a cheerful white display,
His quiv'ring wings are dressed in sober grey.
Sure all the muses this their bird inspire!
And he, alone, is equal to the quire
Of warbling songsters who around him play,
While echo like, he answers every lay.
The chirping lark now sings with sprightly note,
Responsive to her strain he shapes his throat:
Now the poor widow'd turtle wails her mate,
While is soft sounds he coos to mourn his fate.
Oh sweet musician! thou dost far excel
The soothing song of pleasing Philomel!
Sweet is her song, but in few notes confin'd;
But thine, thou mimic of the feath'ry kind,
Runs thro' all notes!—thou only know'st them all,
At once the copy,—and the original.

  My ear thus charmed, my eye with pleasure sees,
Hov'ring about the flow'rs the industrious bees,
Like them in size, the humming-bird I view,
With nimble tongue, and beak of jetty hue.
He takes with rapid whirl his noisy flight
His gemmy plumage strikes the gazers sight;
And as he moves his ever-flutt'ring wings,
Ten thousand colors he around him flings;
Now I behold the emerald's vivid green,
Now scarlet, now a purple dye is seen;
In brightest blue, his breast he now arrays,
Then straight his plumes emit a golden blaze.
Thus whirling round he flies, and varying still,
He mocks the poet's and the painter's skill;
Who may forever strive with fruitless pains,
To catch and fix those beauteous changeful stains
While scarlet now, and now the purple shines,

And gold to blue its transient gloss resigns.
Each quits and quickly each resumes its place,
And ever-varying dyes each other chase.
Smallest of birds, what beauties shine in thee!
A living rainbow on thy breast I see.
  Oh had that *bard in whose heart-pleasing lines [*Claudian, who had a fable about the Phoenix]
The phoenix in a blaze of glory shines,
Beheld those wonders which are shown in thee.
That bird had lost his immortality!
Those in his verse hadst stretch'd a flutt'ring wing
Above all other birds,—their beauteous king….

...

Hush'd is the musick of the wood-land quire
Foreknowing of the storm, the birds retire
For shelter and forsake the shrubby plains…

...

And now the birds, sweet singing, stretch their throats
And in one choir unite their various notes,
Nor yet unpleasing is the turtle's voice,
Tho' he complains while other birds rejoice.
  These vernal joys, all restless thoughts control,
And gently soothing calm the troubled soul.

...

  But see the hawk, who with acute survey,
Tow'ring in air predestinates his prey
Amid the floods—down-dropping from on high,
He strikes the fish, and bears him through the sky.

...

  Onwards the even'ng moves in habit grey,
And for her sister night prepares the way.
The plumy people seek their secret nests,
To rest repair the ruminating beasts....[6]

The New-England Weekly Journal 1731 06 28 page 1 (Food for Criticks/ A New England Pond) by Richard Lewis[7] (uncredited)

...

Of ancient streams presume no more to tell
The fam'd Castalian or Pierian well
Fresh-pond superior, must those rolls confess

As much as Cambridge yields to Rome or Greece
...
Amid the wave the vagrant Blackbird sees,
And tries to perch upon the imag'd trees
...
No noxious Snake disperses poison here,
Nor screams of night bird, rend the twilight air,
Excepting him, who when the groves are still,
Hums am'rous tunes and whistles whip poor Will
...
If to the west your ravish'd eyes you turn,
Behold the glittering spire of Watertown[8]
...
The sweet harmony of the winged choir,
Awake the fancy and the poet's fire
...
Which way fore'er your airy genius leads,
Receive your model from these vocal shades.
Wou'd you in homely pastoral excel,
Take pattern from the merry piping Quail;
Observe the Blue-bird for a roundelay,
The chattering Pye or ever babbling Jay.
The Plaintive Dove the soft love verse can teach,
And mimick Thrash to imitators preach.
In Pindar's strain the Lark salutes the Dawn,
The lyric Robin chirps the ev'ning on.
For poignant Satyr mind the Mavis well,
And hear the Sparrow for a madrigal.
For ev'ry verse a pattern here you have,
From strains heroic, down to humble stave,
Not Phoebus self altho' the god of verse,
Cou'd hit such fine and entertaining airs
...
Some take the fish with a delusive bait,
Or for the fowl beneath the arbours wait,
And arm'd with fire, endanger ev'ry shade
Teaching ev'n unfledg'd innocence a dread;
To gratify a nice luxurious taste,
How many pretty songsters breath their last.
Spite of his voice they fire the Linnet down,
And make the widowed Dove renew his moan,
But some more humane seek the shady gloom,
Taste nature's bounty and admire her bloom.
In pensive tho't revolve long vanish'd toil,
Or in soft song, the pleasing hours beguile.
What Eden was by every prospect told,

Strive to regain the temper of that age of gold.
No artful harms for simple brutes contrive
But scorn to take a being they cannot give.
To leafy woods resort for health and ease,
Not to disturb their melody and peace.

The Pennsylvania Gazette (PA) 1731 07 22 page 3 Philadelphia, July 29. (widely reprinted)

....A pair of king birds have lately built their nest, and hatched their eggs among the rigging of a ship lying in this river....

The Boston Weekly News-Letter (MA) 1731 09 16 page 2 Boston, Sept. 16

...By a letter from Barnstable, dated the 10th instant, we have the following awful occurrence of divine providence, viz. That on Monday the 6th several went out in a boat to kill birds, among whom was Mr. John Sturgos (who married Mrs. Suf. Lothrop) when their game was over, they prepared to return home; their boat being a ground upon the flats, the company were obliged to run her into the water; but before they came to this, the person mentioned left his company, and walked away alone to the edge of the channel, and venturing in, perhaps for some game he espied, found it deeper than he expected, and was drowned, his company being at too great a distance to see him timely in his danger, and to get to him with the boat to afford him relief. His body was not found till Wednesday morning, and then his countenance was awful to behold, his eye-lids being eaten, and some of his flesh at one corner of his mouth, by the fishes. He was buried the day following, aged about 42 years....

1732

The American Weekly Mercury (PA) 1732 03 07 page 1

...I shall produce to view another kind of people, whole time is all bestowed on trifles, and who, amidst the infinite beauties of the Creation, can find nothing to admire but a pebble, a flower, or a caterpillar. Every thing that Providence has formed deserves our observation, and is truly wonderful. But it is exceedingly ridiculous to let some little minute part take off our attention from the whole…A person of this disposition is Mr. Flutterville, a gentleman, that with natural good sense, a tolerable stock of learning and an easy fortune, devotes himself to the pursuit of butterflies….I have heard him wish there was a law made to hinder people from destroying caterpillars, (which he gives a strict charge to have preserved all over his own estate). For who knows, says he, what glorious new species they may produce….

Mr. Plumage is another of these triflers; his passion is for birds, of which he such numbers, that the hall, the parlor, the staircase, the chambers, the closets, nay, even the necessary-house is full of them; insomuch that whoever visits him is sure, in half an hour, to be daubed from head to foot, as they fly over him, whilst the noise they make is so shrill and troublesome that you can't hear one another speak, and may better

hope for quiet in a paper-mill. His time is all employed in feeding them and cleaning the floors after them; and he keeps people with handsome salaries on purpose to teach them on the Flageolet—This is an experience he could not support but that he saves it another way; for his children have neither tutors nor education…

Mr Canker is no less fond of Medals…Mr. Nettlerthrop has a garden…If you talk of books or news, he understands not one word you say; tell him of husbandry and country affairs it is all out of his way; give him an account of flowers, it is much the same thing, for he prizes only one particular species of them and despises all the rest… Who can deny the usefulness of books? They are the delight of Mr. Vellum…He never reads, 'tis true….

Mr. Bevil…This gentleman is remarkable for a fine genius, a found judgement, a sprightly gentile wit, and an abundance of ancient and modern learning…He maintains an amiable character in every part of life; he's a tender husband, an indulgent father, a faithful friend, and a steady patriot…

The Weekly Rehearsal (MA) 1732 05 15 page 1 On the Beauty of the Universe

There is nothing that affords a more sensible proof both of the existence and goodness of God, than the beauty of the universe…

The superstitious among the Romans imagin'd that the places in the country, which were more than commonly pleasant, such as the openings of woods and the flowery margins of fountains, were haunted by certain rural deities. This fancy of theirs has often given me occasion to reflect at the sight of such places that though there are indeed no marks to be seen in them of the preference of their chimerical divinities, yet that an attentive and considering mind may find there many tokens and signatures of the real preference and operation of the true God…

What rhetoric can describe the beauty, or arithmetic the variety, of the several species of flowers?…

The gay plumes and beautiful forms of birds are no less entertaining to the eye than the harmony of their notes is to the ear. Who does not admire the beauty of the peacock, the dove, the pheasant, the parrot, the swan, and innumerable others of the feather'd kind…

The very insects, though so much inferior to other animals in bulk do not at all fall short of them in respect of form and ornament…

The New-England Weekly Journal (MA) 1732 06 19 page 2 Boston (widely reprinted)

...We are informed from Exeter that on Tuesday last, two lads of about 13 years of age, went out in order to kill some birds, and took their guns with them, one of the lads name was Samuel Scribener, the other William Levit; and while pursuing their game, Scribener's flint fell out of his gun, and in putting of it in again he killed his companion Levit; the shot went in at his left shoulder and carried all the back part of his head

away, and he never spoke one word after. 'Tis remarkable that this Samuel Scribener's father was killed after the same manner about a year ago....

1733

The New-England Weekly Journal (MA) 1733 03 12 page 1 The Blessings of Plenty [*Universal Spectator*, August 5, 1732]

The Jews kept an annual feast for the gathering in of the fruits of the year; and all the strains of Mosaic and Oriental eloquence are raised to the utmost pitch, in the display of this blessing of plenty…

The birds have their share of this annual blessing, which furnish our houses with their plumage and our tables with their flesh, contribute to our sport and diversion, and entertain us with those songs and voluntaries which are the only true harmony of the spheres…

After such a general survey, if there were no preacher and writer upon this subject, every grove, like Dodona's, would be vocal; every Oak, like some of old, oracular; and the other trees, plants and animals, without their prompter Aesop, might readily instruct and moralize us.

1734

The Boston Weekly News-Letter (MA) 1734 01 03 page 1 London, Sept 29, 1733 [*The Political State of Great Britain* for September 1733]

Those pernicious birds called magpies which were some years ago planted in Ireland by one of their virtuosos, do so much mischief in the country, that a gentleman in the county of Wicklow has for some time given a reward of two-pence for every nests of young magpies, and a penny for every grown one, by which piece of public spirit, he has almost destroyed the brood of them in his neighborhood, and if all the gentlemen of that kingdom would follow his example, they might rid the kingdom of that plague.

The Boston Gazette (MA) 1734 07 01 page 3 A Poem to Amanda on May

Now Nature with her various verdure glows;
Green is the wood, and blushing every rose;
The Mead that late frown'd with a sullen face,
Now smiles again recov'ring every grace;
Silence and death that reigned through all the grove,
Give place to music, harmony and love;
For now the birds on every bough rejoice,
And sing the welcome month with gladsome voice
...
Not Eden's garden singed with richest days,
Nor ought beside, can charm my partial eyes:

The tuneful choirs (delightful as they are)
In vain attempt my captivated ear…

The New-England Weekly Journal (MA) 1734 07 15 page 1 To the Author of the Weekly Journal

Sir, As I live a country life, and am something given to contemplation, I take a great pleasure in viewing the beauties of the creation, especially in that season of the year when nature seems to be fresh and blooming, and in those parts of the day at the rising and setting of the sun, when nature seems to be most beautiful and gay; I have considered the rising and setting of the sun as a glorious show in nature.

Hail! Sol supreme the glory of the skies
Whose radiant beams, this morn regales my eyes
…
The meadows all adorned with opening flowers,
Melodious birds chirp on the morning hours
…
At length sinks down behind the western hills,
Darkness perceives, fogs fill the dusky vales.
The charming birds their tuneful notes forget,
Fly to some forest for a safe retreat….

The American Weekly Mercury (PA) 1734 10 17 page 3 London, August 6

On Thursday last, when the Indian King, Queen, and Chiefs, were introduced to his Majesty, Tomo Chachi, the King, made the following speech.

…These are the feathers of the eagle, which is the swiftest of birds, and which flieth all round our nations. These feathers are a sign of peace in our land, and have been carried from town to town there, and we have brought them over to leave with you, O Great King! as a sign of everlasting peace.

O Great King! whatsoever words you shall say unto me, I will tell them faithfully to all the kings of the Creek nations.

To which His Majesty was pleased to give this most gracious answer

I…accept very gratefully this present, as an indication of their good disposition to me and my people…

1735

Weekly Rehearsal (MA) 1735 01 13 page 1 From the Camp of San Benedetto, Sept. 13

…the enemy's guard fell into the snare that was laid for them; but the project was not so fully executed as it might have been…but his eagerness for drawing the net, suffered some of the birds to fly…

The Boston Weekly News-Letter (MA) 1735 02 06 page 2

We have an account from Bristol of an occurrence which is pretty remarkable and somewhat extraordinary: It is as follow, One Mr. Silas Remington being at work on the west side of Prudence Island on Monday the 27th of January past, and hearing an uncommon screech in the air, he looked up and saw two birds called Old Wives, both of which descended immediately into the water, with such quickness and force, as if two logs had fell therein. Remington perceiving them lying on the water as if dead, launched a canoe near at hand, and paddled to the fowls, took 'em both up, cut off their heads, they bled freely, and he carried them home. Some of the neighbors hearing of this strange event, went to Remington's house to know the truth thereof; one of them asked his wife, What she intended to do with those birds? She made answer, we design to eat them: What, said the neighbor, are you not afraid? No, replied the woman, We are poor people, and God has sent them us.

1736

The Boston Evening-Post (MA) 1736 10 11 page 2 Boston

On Thursday last John Jenks of Lynn, being at work in his field, discovered a flock of ten wild turkeys among the corn, at which he discharged his gun, and killed five upon the spot, and so wounded another, that he soon after recovered it. They were fine young birds, and weighed about nine pounds each. 'Tis said there have not been seen or killed so many wild turkeys in that town in fifty years past.

The Pennsylvania Gazette 1736 11 11 page 1 The Waste of Life [Benjamin Franklin, not credited] (widely reprinted)

When I meet with persons of such a worthless character as this, it brings to my mind some scraps of Horace,

Nos numerus sumus, & fruges consumere nati. .... Alcinoique Juventus…Cui pulchrum fuit in Medios dormire dies, &c.

Paraphrase.

There a number of us creep
Into this world, to eat and sleep;
And know no reason why they're born,
But merely to consume the corn,
Devour the cattle, fowl and fish,
And leave behind an empty dish:
Tho' crows and ravens do the same,
Unlucky birds of hateful name
Ravens or crows might fill their place,
And swallow corn and carcasses.
Then, if their tomb-stone when they die,
Ben't taught to flatter and to lie,

There's nothing better will be said.
Than that they've eat up all their bread,
Drank up all their drink and gone to bed.

The Virginia Gazette (VA) 1736 12 31 page 1 The Monitor No. 17

…These transformations and transmigrations may seem strange to some incredulous people; therefore, to prove the veracity and make it incontestable, I refer you to Plato's Book of his Republic.

Orpheus made choice of the body of a swan, Tamiris that of the Nightingale, Ajax's soul chose the body of a lion, Agamemnon's animated an Eagle….which proves the transmigration of souls into trees, plants, and all things else…

1737

The Virginia Gazette (VA) 1737 07 22 page 3 Song

I. Loveliest creature hither come;
Behold the spring in all its bloom
…

III. Hear! the young birds extend their throats,
Excelling all but Chloe's notes;
Hark! hark! the feathered choir rejoice,
But O! I thought it Chloe's voice.
'Twas musick soft, so very soft, and clear,
I thought 'twas Chloe come to glad the year
…

1738

The Virginia Gazette (VA) 1738 03 31 page 3 Norwich, Dec 24.

Yesterday a boy at Trowse went into the fields with a gun charged only with powder to scare the birds, but when he went to discharge the piece, it would not go off, so returning, he went to the smith's, to get the charge taken out, which was attempted by putting a hot iron into the muzzle, and set the piece right up in a corner of the shop, when presently after another boy coming in, took up the gun and blew into it, which soon lighted the wad, and the powder taking fire, the piece went off, and shot the wad into his mouth, which penetrated into his skull and kill'd him on the spot.

The American Weekly Mercury (PA) 1738 04 13 page 1

…The hypocrite, of all creatures is generally agreed to be the most detestable and destructive to society; yet we find none more eager after applause, nor any that covets to be thought more just than he. *Hyppocrita cupit se videri justum*, is an ancient and true observation; guided by the same principle, the most insincere and unworthy persons take most pains to seek fame and avoid the contempt which their actions justly

claim. Among the many artful means used for that end, the story of Psapho is a notable one; He taught the birds to cry, μέγας θεός ψαφων, Psapho is a great God, and so let them fly, which gave him a mighty veneration among the vulgar...[9]

A person that has cruelly harassed and imprisoned a printer, and again caused him to be assaulted and knocked down in the open street, merely for copying an English print, or inserting in his newspaper some general invectives against a particular vice, which by a foreign innuendo, or consciousness of guilt, the person applied to himself, can no more merit the character of a sincere advocate for the Liberty of the Press than a venal hireling for a fulsome harangue does the name of a Cato[10]…

The Virginia Gazette (VA) 1738 05 19 page 4 Letter by "Philo-Patris"

I doubt not but you have heard of the severe plague of canker-worms that are at this time devouring the wheat all over the country. A compleat remedy for so great an evil is hardly to be hoped for: but I have tried one thing, upon the experience of a gentleman of Gloucester County, with good success.... I sent a good number of turkies to devour them in the trench but though they filled their bellies, yet they left millions.

1740

The New-York Weekly Journal (NY) 1740 01 19 page 1 Good Nature, a character often usurped [From *Gentlemans's Magazine*]

...But there is a much worse, and more, numerous sort of fools; which are the crafty, subtle, designing fools who rise just enough out of the fool to get a little into the knave and who have just sense enough to know that they have not sense enough to recommend them, and therefore have recourse to the appearances of great good nature, which they produce upon all occasions…Their tone is soft and plaintive, their conversation insipidly stuffed with fulsome panegyric, tender epithets, and compassionate interjections, such as alas! poor Man! &c. Nay, their tenderness extends to animals and they caress dogs and birds, with the gentle appellations of poor things, and poor fellows. By these arts they impose upon the weak and superficially judging part of mankind, are reckoned the best natured, best sort of people in the world, and are not only well received in companies, but admitted into friendships and confidences, which they seldom fail to abuse when it suits with their interest….

The American Weekly Mercury (PA) 1740 02 19 page 1 poem by "Enroblob"

Mr. Bradford, Reading a few years ago a poem in one of the Newspapers, entitled, a walk from Annapolis to Potapsco [sic]: It furnished me with a Hint, whereupon I have digested the following, which however deficient to that piece; may if you think proper, be inserted into your newspaper...

O Heavenly Muse my daring breast inspire,
With sacred warmth and with celestial fire;
Thee I implore to whom all power belong,
God is my theme do thou assist my song.

Here where so late a wilderness was found,
Where rocks and trees and shrubs o'er spread the ground,
Where all was wild, of human art bereft.
Bearing that form which long the Flood had left.

But in the thicket now no dread appears,
Produces terror, or begets our fears;
The craggy rock, nor fenny brake now shew,
No monstrous brood, that may beget our woe;
Instead of wilds, the watery springs abound,
Through mazes wind, and fertilize the ground;
The gloomy thicket now a lawn is seen
And different herbage decked in various green;
The oak and walnut felled, which thickest grew,
The sun again beholds the earth anew…

...

And now ye reasoning bards who dare maintain,
By philosophic rules ye can explain,
Such latent causes, here my query take,
And solve it plainly for your credit's sake.
How rattle snakes, frogs, fowls, and birds can charm,
The victim flies to death nor dreams of harm?
Alas I doubt my question will recur,
Impotent bards will to this truth demur
They must demur, nor can the cause be found,
By those who knew no cure against his wound.

The American Weekly Mercury (PA) 1740 02 26 page 1 Continuation of poem by "Enroblob"

Now through diff'rent paths I walk along,
The notes of birds contribute to my song;
Whose various species and whose diff'rent kind,
By strictest search is hard I own to find.
By one name only many sorts they call,
And many others, have no name at all;
Of all the smaller tribe, the wren alone
In Britain's isle, I heretofore have known.
But what is he*, who perch'd above the rest, [*Mocking bird]
Pours forth such various music from his breast,
Supreme of birds, who dressed in sober grey,
In notes harmonious, ushers in the day,
Unblessed with natural songs, yet learns from all,
At once their copy, and original.
With wonder next the humming bird behold,

Deck'd in gay colours, burnish'd o'er with gold,
Not Juno's favorite bird appears so fine,
Nor Iris self when most her beauties shine;
Whilst in a garden, thick with flowers set,
Hovering he lights, their honey dew to get,
Ten thousand hues reflect upon our fight
And blaze on blaze, administer delight:
At every instant such bright rays expand,
As must elude the greatest painter's hand,
All nature's pow'r collected here we find,
To deck the smallest of the feather'd kind....

The Pennsylvania Gazette (PA) 1740 03 20 page 3 Philadelphia

...And from Mount Holly we hear, that last week a young lad who had been shooting pigeons, hanging a parcel of them over the barrel of his gun, they flipped down to the trigger, which was without guard, and discharg'd the piece against his breast, and killed him on the spot....

The New-York Weekly Journal 1740 05 12 page 1 Description of the Spring by S.W.

Begin ye Muses, that delight to rove
Amidst the Sylvan scene, and range the shady groves,
While the gay season in bright splendor reigns,
And beauteous Flora paints the smiling plains;
Shall you be silent and forget to sing,
When every voice salutes the blooming spring.

…

Hark! how the birds their warbling note prolong
And vocal groves reecho to the song.
The Turtle moans in melancholy strains,
Nor yet unpleasing though she thus complains.

The chirping lark high towering in the air
With charming notes delights the listening ear
Hush'd is the music of the tuneful throng
Who silent sit to hear his sweeter song.

See! the mock-bird that mimic of the rest
Now pouring various music from his breast,
He echo-like returns the pleasing lays,
Of each musician that around him plays.

…

These vernal joys control the anxious breast,

And gently soothing calm the soul to rest.

The New-York Weekly Journal (NY) 1740 07 21 page 3 [*The Craftsman* May 3, 1740]

Whoever doubts that Brutes converse, may be convinced of it by Aesop's Fables, and a little book lately translated, called the *Language of the Birds and Beasts*[11]. How the following petition of the same nature came to my hands is a secret, which I do not think myself bound in honor to reveal.

To the Honourable Master of the Swineries in and about London.
The Humble Petition of Ralph Freeman, Esq; of the stye in Pater-Noster-Row.

That your Petitioner was farrow'd at Hog's Norton, where he learn'd to play upon the organ, and soon conceiv'd hopes of being brought to a fine market.

That he was driven up to St. Jame's in order to be sold, but being very measley, and not fit for His Majesty's Service, he was bought by your Honour's principle hog jobber, who assur'd him that he should soon wallow in rich mire, wherein your Petitioner cannot say that he has been entirely disappointed.

That notwithstanding your Petitioner is a hog of delicacy, though plac'd amongst the most filthy of his kind, the noses of which your Honour's hog-jobbers aforesaid hath left un-rung, for reasons best known to himself, and to the great annoyance of the whole stye; for tho' none of us are very cleanly creatures, yet their abominable nastiness not only offends your petitioner, but all your faithful servants.

Your petitioner therefore most humbly prays that a separate stye may be alloted to himself, where he may devote his gruntings, without interruption, to your Honour's service, and your Petitioner, as in duty bound, shall ever pray. R. Freeman.

1742

The New-York Weekly Journal (NY) 1742 04 05 page 1 [From the *Daily Gazetteer*]

...On hearing this, I looked up and found we were sailing into the mouth of the haven, when I had a lovelier prospect than before; and, what, my Lord, said I, is this charming land, and to whom does it belong? for I see no inhabitants. I see only a variety of nature's beauties, groves, gardens, meadows, here trees in blossom and there other bending with ripened fruit.

This region, replied he, this beauteous region, is the Kingdom of the Wise Birds: Their history, as I have heard it, is thus,—Other nations you are to know, and families of fowl are governed, mostly by kites or vultures; but these, having had the wisdom to choose the peacock for their sovereign, the Goddess Juno was so pleased with them that she took them into her protection and gave them for their reward this sweet and pleasant residence.

—It would take up whole days to tell you all their virtues and good qualities. They

hate the daw that gets his wealth dishonestly and hides it; Among their magistracy and dispensers of justice, you will see, at no time, any of the owl race, let his outward gravity be ever too great: They will not suffer the jay and magpie to be noisy and impertinent in their assemblies, but listen with devotion to the sweet voice of the lark and nightingale: If a finch, or other bird of colors dies, they change not for that their gold and sapphires to sable, nor hire crows to mourn for him: In a word, whatever is beneficial to the community they encourage, and thereof favor more than all others birds of traffic, who make yearly voyages to the moon and bring their own country the spoil of that rich planet. But their chief cardinal virtue is that happy temper, or rather instinct, that unites them in times of danger; they then forget all private bickerings; they keep close together; and they hover round their King in brown battalions, darkening the sky.

The Pennsylvania Gazette (PA) 1742 03 25 page 3 Philadelphia

Sunday last some young men being in the field near Germantown shooting pigeons, one of their guns went off by accident, and shot a young lad of the company through the arm, into the side, and wounded him so that he died in half an hour.

The American Weekly Mercury (PA) 1742 05 20 page 1 Stockholm, February 9 (widely reprinted)

...On Sunday last was published in all the churches in this city, the king's order forbidding all Jews, players with cups and balls, rope-dancers savoyards, fellows that sell barometers, thermometers, and hydrometers, and in general all vagabonds or beggars to enter this Kingdom. By another order, considerable rewards are proposed for the killing of all sorts of birds of prey, and other animals that do mischief in the country....

1743

The Boston Weekly Post-Boy (MA) 1743 06 27 page 3 Boston House of Representatives, June 24th 1743.

For as much as the appropriation for grants in the Act for Supply of the Treasury is near exhausted, It is therefore ordered, That the treasurer be directed to give public notice, That no Certificate from the Select-men of any town in the province, for any black-birds, crows, water-rats, grey or ground squirrels, that shall be killed after the first day of August next, will be received or paid until the further order of his court. Sent up for concurrence, T. Cushing, Speaker.

1745

The New-York Evening-Post (NY) 1745 01 28 page 1

The inserting of the following piece I hope will be very agreeable to my readers, during this scarcity of news....

I was walking two or three days ago in a very pleasing retirement, and amusing myself with the reading of that ancient and beautiful allegory, called The Table of Cebes. I was at last so tired with my walk, that I sate down to rest my self upon a bench that stood in the midst of an agreeable shade.—The music of the birds that filled all the trees about me, lulled me asleep before I was aware of it; which was followed by a dream, that I impute in some measure to the foregoing author…

1746

The Boston Gazette, or Weekly Journal (MA) 1746 03 11 page 1 Solomon's Songs translated by "Philo-Muses"

Canto 2....He spake, how soft, how kindly does he say...

"Arrayed in green, the rising flow'rs appear
"And odorous blossoms wide perfume the air
"The tuneful birds conspire in ev'ry grove,
"And the sweet turtle joins the cooing dove…

The Virginia Gazette (VA) 1746 07 18 page 1 Inverness, April 16

...As there never was a nobler subject for festivity than the late defeat of the rebels, by the conduct of the valiant Duke of Cumberland, and the bravery of the troops…This infamous rebellion, hatched in obscurity, being hooted off with so much splendor, that none of those birds of evil omen (the Jackobites[1,2]) dared, spite of their Gallico Roman Bronze, to face it....

1747

The New York Gazette, Revived in the Weekly Post-Boy (NY) 1747 05 04 page 1 An Epistolary poem, addressed to Miss M—Y W—N. by "Philoparthenos"

Sweet nature smiles! and to the raptured eyes
Bids all her vernal charms enchanting rise
…
The birds in every grove repeat their strains,
The sportive lambkins frisk the verdant plains...

1749

The Pennsylvania Gazette (PA) 1749 06 01 page 2 Philadelphia, June 1 (widely reprinted).

For the information of naturalists in distant places it may not be amiss to mention that the woods of the province are at this time filled with infinite numbers of locusts, which come out of the ground, crawl up trees, and their out coat splitting on the back, they come out of it with wings and fly from tree to tree making a continual noise. They are not observed to eat anything, but other creatures eat them in abundance; fowls of all sorts, hogs, dogs, cats, &c. watch their coming out, and devour them greedily. And 'tis

said that birds that used to damage the new planted Indian corn fields and pick the early cherries, neglect those things and live entirely on locusts…"

The Pennsylvania Journal or Weekly Advertiser (PA) 1749 10 12 page 1 A Night-piece by "a Physician " [From the *Gentleman's Magazine* for June 1749]

Hark!—the prophetic raven brings
My summons on his boding wings:
The bird of night my fate foretell,
The prescient death-watch founds my knell…

The Boston Evening-Post (MA) 1749 11 13 page 1 Letter from unnamed correspondent.

To the Publisher of the Boston Evening Post

Sir, If you think it worth while, you may give the following lines a place in your paper, when you have nothing more useful or entertaining.

The late drought, which has been the subject of much conversation, as well as the just cause of many fears, has been extremely hard and pinching; and no doubt much more so in some places than in others: but the great scarcity of hay, is not wholly owing to the want of rain; many have suffered more by the vast number of worms and grasshoppers than by the dry season. The early drought was no doubt the cause of their prodigious increase; but their continuance, and the ravage they have made, seems to be very much owing to the want of birds, whose proper food they are. An hundred dozen of black-birds, this year, would have been welcome guests to many farmers, and the most profitable stock they could have pastured. It was therefore a great mistake, perhaps, tho' well intended, in the several governments of New England, to give such encouragement, as they have done in times past, for the destruction of those birds. They are what we call mischievous creatures, with a good deal of reason; but they were not made in vain; they love grain of all kinds, but they are easily frighted from it; nor do they ever do half the damage that has commonly been done of late years by those insects on which they feed. It is certain that the pigeon, the robin and the black bird are very great enemies to the grass-worm, and to the worm that destroys the orchards, and no doubt but they feed also upon the grasshoppers, as almost all the winged tribe do.

It may therefore be a work not altogether useless, perhaps, to consider, whether the ruin of the orchards and the great damage frequently done in the meadows and pastures is not greatly owing to the decrease of birds, which has been occasioned partly by the late Acts, partly by the Trees being too many of them destroyed near the sea coasts and great towns, and more than all, perhaps by the wantonness of boys and idle gunners, who spend much of their time in shooting them.—A country philosopher looks upon the birds of the air, as a little flying army of the wise and good creator, by which he may punish a sinful generation of men, but more frequently defends them from insects, which might otherwise easily ruin them. It is certainly too nice a point for us to determine when the birds are too numerous for the general good or benefit of the land: they are not suffered greatly to increase, but for wise and good purposes; and what the

land has suffered of late years, seemingly by their decrease, may serve to confirm us in the belief of this one time, (viz) that there is a wisdom above us, that knows much better than we do, what is best for us, and a power, that preserves and governs every species of creatures so that not one is lost, and will suffer none of them greatly to injure us, unless by our wickedness we provoke him, or by our ignorance expose ourselves, as I can't but think we have done of late years, very much, by attempting to lessen their numbers, before we had sufficiently considered their design and usefulness.

I am, Sir, Yours, &c.

1750

The South-Carolina Gazette (SC) 1750 01 15 page 1 London, October 3 (widely reprinted).

A great number of locusts have been found this year in different parts of England...

By letters from Breslau we have advice, that on the 1st of October, N.S. the town was darkened for five hours together by the passage of several prodigious swarms of locusts, one of which was almost as large as the whole city and suburbs. They kept at about the height of 150 yards while on the wing and then spread themselves all over the adjacent fields and meadows, where the ravens and rooks, magpies and other birds, fed upon them and devoured vast quantities; but considering how much was left, it may be compared to taking a bucket of water out of the seas.[13]

Advices from Osnabrug, of the 8th Inst. N.S. say, That as the locusts still make great havoc in Franconia, and other districts adjacent, and are advancing towards the north-west of Germany, public prayers are ordered in divers places to beg of the Almighty to turn back this dreadful plague from the countries that seem to be threaten'd with it; but we can't learn that they pray to discern the cause for which this scourge is sent; however, they say they hope to be soon rid of those insects, as winter is drawing nigh; a [...] which every knows as well as themselves, tho' nobody can tell whether this plague will increase next year as it has done since the summer of the year 1747....

The South-Carolina Gazette (SC) 1750 04 30 page 1 France [*Gentleman's Magazine* for December, 1749]

…A very extraordinary bird has been taken in Dauphiny, entirely white, partly like a swan, and having a fine red bill; its length from head to tail was 16 feet; in its stomach were 35 pounds of fish[14]….

1751

The Boston Gazette or Weekly Journal (MA) 1751 02 12 page 1 [*Whitehall Evening-Post*, September 1, 1750]

Having in a former paper entered upon a series of moral reflections on the works of creation, and there-in treated particularly of the vegetable part thereof, we shall in

this, continue the like observations on animals, considering them in the order of their creation, viz.

...

Birds. We see a surprising imitation of reason in several animals, but it no where appears in a more sensible manner than in the industry of birds in building their nests. In the first place, what master has taught them that they have need of them? Who has taken care to inform them to prepare them in time, and not to suffer themselves to be prevented by necessity? Who has told how they should build them? What mathematician has given them their figure? What architect has taught them to choose a firm place, and to build upon a solid foundation? What tender mother has advised them to cover the bottom with a soft and delicate substance, such as down and cotton? And when these matters fail, who has suggested to them that ingenious charity, which leads them to pluck off so many feathers from their own breasts with their beaks, as is requisite for the preparing a convenient cradle for their young?

In the second place, what wisdom has pointed out to every distinct kind a peculiar manner of building their nests, so as to observe the same precautions, though in a thousand different ways? Who has commanded the swallow, the most subtle of birds, to draw near to man and make choice of his house for the building of his nest, within his view, without fear of his knowing it, and seeming rather to invite him to a consideration of his labour? Neither does he build like other birds with little bits of sticks and stubble, but employs cement and mortar, and in so solid a manner, that it requires some pains to demolish its work; and yet in all this it makes use of no other instrument but its beak. Reduce, if it is possible, the ablest architect to the small bulk of this swallow, leave him all his knowledge and only a beak, and see if he will have the same skill and the like success.

Thirdly, who has made all the birds comprehend that they must hatch their eggs by sitting upon them? That this necessity was indispensable? That the father and mother could not leave them at the same time; and that if one went abroad to seek for food, the other must wait till it returns? Who has fixed in the calendar the express number of days this painful diligence is to last? Who has advertised them to assist the young, that are already formed, in coming out of the egg by first breaking the shell? And who has so exactly instructed them in the very moment before which they never come?

Lastly, who has given lessons to all the bird upon the care they ought to take of their young, till such time as they are grown up, and in a condition to provide for themselves? Who has made them distinguish such things as agree well with one species, but are prejudicial to another? And amongst such as are proper to the parents, and unfit for the young, who has made them distinguish such as are salutary? We know the tenderness of mothers, and the carefulness of nurses amongst mankind, but I question whether it ever came up to what we see in these little creatures.

Who has taught several among the birds that marvelous industry of retaining food or water in their gullet, without swallowing either the one or the other, and preserving them for their young, to whom this first preservation serves instead of milk?

Is it for the birds, O Lord, that thou hast joined together so many miracles, which they have no knowledge of? Is it for men, who give no attention to them? Is it for the curious, who are satisfied with admiring them, without raising their thoughts to thee? Or is it not rather visible, that thy design has been to call us to thyself by such a spectacle; to make us sensible of thy providence and infinite wisdom; and to fill us with confidence in thy bounty, who watchest with so much care and tenderness over the birds, though two of them are sold but for a farthing?

But let us set bounds to our observations upon the industry of birds, for the subject is infinite, and hearken for a moment to the concert of their music, the first praise which God received from nature, and the first song of thanksgiving which was offered to him before man was formed. All their sounds are different, but all harmonious, and all together compose a choir which men have but sorrily imitated. One voice however, more strong and melodious is distinguished among the rest, and I find upon inquiry, from whence it comes, that it is a very small bird, which is the organ of it. This leads me to consider all the rest of the singing tribe, and they also are all small; the great ones being either wholly ignorant of music, or having a disagreeable voice. Thus I every where find, that what seems weak and small has the best destination, and the most gratitude.

Some of these little birds are extremely beautiful, nor can any thing be more rich or variegated than their feathers; but it must be owned, that all ornament must give place to the finery of the peacock, upon which God has plentifully bestowed all the riches which set off the rest, and lavished upon it with gold and azure all the shades of every other colour. This bird seems sensible of its advantage, and looks as if designed to display all its beauties to our eyes, when it expands that splendid circumference which sets them all to view.

But this most pompous bird of all has a most disagreeable cry, and is a proof, that with a very shining outside there may be but a sorry substance within, little gratitude and a great deal of vanity.

In examining the feathers of the rest, I find one thing very singular in those of the swans and other river fowl, for they are proof against the water, and continue always dry, and yet our eyes do not discover either the artifice or difference of them.

I look upon the feet of the same birds, and observe webs there, which distinctly mark their destination. But I am much astonished to see these birds so sure, that they run no hazard by throwing themselves into the water, whereas others, to whom God has not given the like feathers or feet, are never so rash as to expose themselves to it. Who has told the former that they run no danger, and who keeps back the others from following their example? It is not unusual to set duck eggs under a hen, which in this case is deceived by her affection, and takes a foreign brood for her natural offspring, that run to the water as soon as they come out of the shell, nor can their pretended mother prevent them by her repeated calls. She stands upon the brink in astonishment at their rashness, and still more at the success of it. She finds herself violently tempted to follow them, and warmly expresses her impatience, but nothing is capable of carrying her to an indiscretion which God has prohibited. The spectators are surprised

at it, more or less in proportion to their understanding; for it is from the want of light and understanding, that such prodigies excite so little admiration. But it is rare that the spectators learn from this example, that it is necessary to be destined by providence to discharge the functions of a dangerous state, and to receive from it all that is requisite for our security; and that it is a fatal rashness for others to venture upon it, who have neither the same vocation nor the same talents.

I shall content myself with one observation more, which takes in several others, and relates to birds of passage. They have all their allotted times, which they do not exceed; but this time is not the same for every species; some wait for the winter, others the spring; some the summer, and others the autumn. There is amongst every sort a public and general rule of government, which guides and retains every single bird in its duty. Before the general edict, there is none thinks of departing. After its publication, there is no one tarries behind. A kind of council fixes the day, and grants a certain time to prepare for it, after which they all take their flight; and so exact is their discipline, that the next day there is not a straggler or deserter to be found. Many people know no other bird but the swallow that acts thus, but it is certain that many other species do the same. Now I ask, though we had but the single instance of the swallow, what news have they received from the countries whither they go in great companies, to be assured that they shall find all things there prepared for their reception? I ask, why they do not keep like other birds to the country where they have brought up their young, which have been so kindly treated in it? By what disposition to travel does this new brood, which knows no other than its native country, conspire all at once to quit it? In what language is the ordinance published, which forbids all, both old and new subjects of the republic, to tarry beyond a certain day? And lastly, by what signs do the principal magistrates know, that they should run an extreme hazard in exposing themselves to be prevented by a rigorous season? What other answer can be given to these questions than that of the prophet, O Lord, how manifold are thy works, in wisdom hast thou made them all!

The Virginia Gazette (VA) 1751 04 04 page 1 A letter from a Statesman retired from Court, to my Lord——, in Commendation of a Country Life.

My Lord,

Could I think you capable of insulting me in this my absolute retreat from all the polite and modish part of society, when you request from me a detail of my solitary amusements; no one should exact a more severe satisfaction. But as I have no reason to question your former friendship, I shall, with my usual undignified openness, lay before you my manner of life…

And as a specimen of those thought which my retirement inspires me with, read the following soliloquy, with which I this morning addressed the great Spirit of Nature:

Ye woods and wilds, receive me to your shade!
These still retreats my contemplation aid:
From mortals flying to your chaste abode,
Let me attend the instructive voice of God!

He speaks in all, and is in all things found,
I hear him, I perceive him all-around
…
'Tis not the chant of birds nor whispering breeze
But thy soft voice I seek among the trees…"

1752

The Pennsylvania Gazette (PA) 1752 03 24 page 1 The Mock Bird and Red Bird: A Fable (widely reprinted)

Sir, This accompanies a little new piece, which may be called an American Fable, lately written in this country. T'other day it came to my hands and I send it to you to publish, if you imagine that it may be useful, and agreeable to the public. The moral makes against vanity…

It would be a fine thing for our writers to take it in their thoughts, that they study and compose, not only for a province, or fall the colonies, but for the whole British Empire….

I am far from thinking this Fable of such elegance: The conduct of it seems exceptionable. The Red Bird, which appears to be the writer's favorite, is not without his share of vanity. Why should he upbraid the other, so fine a bird too, with his little eyes? He does not insult on his advantage, but he flies and sings, which is something like it. This much may be said for him, that the other was the aggressor, he provokes, and self-defense justifies.

But if there are faults in it, that should not induce my making a new one, by being so tedious on the subject; I shall leave it to the critics, who will soon find out its faults; and be apt to take, 'tis well if not to tear both birds to pieces; though, with their leave, that is not the way to encourage other birds to sing, and raise concerts worth the hearing…

The Mock Bird and Red Bird: A Fable

...Some birds, (it is no news to tell)
Can sing, and in their songs excel,
Then, need we any wonder make,
If, sometimes, we should hear them speak?
The Mock Bird, on a time, 'tis said,
Thus the sweet Red Bird did upbraid:
'Ah, simple bird with one poor note!
'One, and no more! to swell thy throat;
'One, and no more canst thou repeat.
'To charm the woods, or cheer thy mate.
'One, and no more! poor bird, whist I
'Abound in sweet variety.
'Nor is't thy voice, thy voice alone,
'Thou simpleton! that I bemoan.

‘Methinks, your colour looks as mean,
‘All of one hue! all red, in grain! (a)
‘Your topping’s something like, ‘tis true,
‘But that too’s red! all red poor you.
  The Red Bird heard the taunting strain,
And answer’d, without pride or pain,
‘Poor me! thou proud ambitious bird,
‘Thy self may better claim that word.
‘They’re poor, who never are content,
‘But till t’usurp from others bent,
‘Poor is the Lilly that’s so fair?
‘Or red rose; which embalms the air?
‘I wish not to grow proud and vain, (b)
‘By picking plumes of various strain,
‘Nor would feign’d song, by rapine raise,
‘Content with my own native lays.
‘My voice, thou Mocker, ‘tis well known,
‘Such as it is,——t is my own;
‘And let us leave it to fair votes,
‘As sweet as yours, with all your notes,
‘But your small eyes can only see
‘The beauties in yourself that be:
‘And there, as little as they are,
‘They magnify, ——and so prefer.
  The Mock Bird cry’d—Ha? my small eyes—
‘But eyes are not to win the prize.
‘The question is of voice and colour,
‘And not whose gogle eyes are fuller.
‘Hark, have you ears?each’—strain it try’d
And swell’d with music, and with pride.
Then would have spoke again, but, choak’d
With spite and spleen— it rather croak’d.
‘Ah! my throat’s hoarse—it scarce could utter—
And yet seem’d something more to mutter.
Then, taking flight, its weakness found,
And, flutt’ring, fell upon the ground.
  The Red Bird not insulting stood,
But wing’d and warbl’d thro’ the wood.
  The Moral to be learn’d from hence,
Is pretty plain—let’s have the sense
Simplicity of life and heart
To love, and scorn delusive art:
Never, thro’ spite, which swells and bloats,
T’ enflame our breasts, or strain our throats:
To shun all foolish ostentation;
And be contented with our station.

(a b) There is some little variety of colour in the Red Bird, tho', by what the Mocking Bird says, we might think there was none at all; but it is not in taunts and scoffs that we are to expect truth. The Red Bird seems little careful to answer that taunt, as taking no pride in colours.

The Pennsylvania Gazette (PA) 1752 04 16 page 1 On the Spring by T.B.

The flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land. *Cant*. ii 12.

Hark—how the groves and woods resound
With notes from every tree,
The feathered songsters puff their throats,
To chirp in melody;
The Linnet, Thrush, and Nightingale
Do now begin to sing
With cheerful notes, and pleasant strains,
To welcome in the spring.
Hail! Pregnant time, with beauty crowned,
With music's science flow,
Inspire my quill with sacred mirth
In ev'ry line to glow
…
The woods and caverns all around
With acclamations ring,
And ev'ry songster, perched on high,
Tunes welcome, welcome spring.

The New-York Gazette revived in the Weekly Post-Boy (NY) 1752 05 11 page 2 The Cherry-Tree and Peach-Tree: An American Fable

Trees once could speak, some authors say,
And now 'tis talk'd, that 'tother day,
A Cherry-Tree, in vernal pride,
A Peach, hard by, did thus deride.
'Ha! Neighbor Peach, methinks, you look
'Like one with some disaster struck;
'I doubt that this last winter's frost,
'Has shewn its rigour to your cost.
'The birds, wont to frequent, so fond,
'Your early sweets, now fly, beyond…

1753

The Boston Weekly News-Letter (MA) 1753 01 04 page 1 A Letter &c [London Magazine, August 1752] The Senate of Abdera to the great Physician Hippocrates treating him to come and cure their philosopher Democritus of

madness.

...Our great philosopher Democritus is fallen sick…He sits up and raves both night and day… Also affirms the air to be full of images, that the birds have a language that he understands, and that he often travels into the infinity of things where he meets with many such as himself….

The Pennsylvania Journal and Weekly Advertiser (PA) 1753 01 23 The History of Leontine and Clora [*The Royal Magazin*e, 1750]

…After dinner they took a turn in the garden, where Leonine was surprised to see how the dædal hand of Nature was improved by the aid of art. That everything might wear the face of nature, all exotics were excluded, to make room for plants of our own growth…

In the middle of the garden was a sort of wilderness, or thicket of trees and shrubs, where Arcasto, at the request of his daughter, (who was his only child) had erected a little hovel in form of a ruined cottage. The inside of it was ceiled with moss, and the outside over-run with a thick ivy, that afforded a safe asylum of the birds, especially the smaller sort, which were seen in great numbers, and were the only inhabitants of the place, except the young Lady Miss Clora, who spent great part of her time with them, and had by frequent feeding them, taught 'em to hop round her like so many tame Doves. Kindness and Constancy will tame the fiercest animals; and 'tis perhaps, owing to our cruelty that we are abandoned by those agreeable companions. While Leonine was admiring the rusticity of the hovel, and the harmony of the birds, Clora reached an ivory flagellate, and played several short tunes, which to Leotine's great surprise, were repeated by some bullfinches, and imitated by other birds. 'Twas impossible to enter this retired place without being charmed, and especially with the Divine Clora, who had the art of making every thing surpassingly agreeable....

The Pennsylvania Gazette (PA) 1753 11 01 page 2 Advertisement. Imported in the last vessel from, and to be sold, by David Hall

Booklist includes "History of Birds[15]."

1754

The Pennsylvania Journal and Weekly Advertiser (PA) 1754 01 22 The Monitor No. 52

...Men of the best principles sometimes do wrong, from inattention; and the most humane are often inconsiderately cruel: The severity sometimes falls upon their own species; but the effect of it on other creatures are innumerable. Things are done out of our sight which we occasion, though it be indirectly; and those are not less culpable, who are the cause of barbarities being exercised, than they who with their own hands execute them.

I have often been an advocate for the brute creation; and I shall continue to be so: They have not voice; but Man has reason. This can at once supply the place of the

tongue to complain, of the ear to receive the sound, and of the heart to feel. We shut not up the passage to one sense alone, but we throw off all humanity, when we know we wantonly occasion the torture of other animals.

Actions in themselves base may be rendered more contemptible by the purpose; and in the most frequent instances of this fault, our barbarity has that aggravation. We are often idly, often unnecessarily cruel to the inferior order of beings; but the most frequent and continual severities are practiced upon them for the pleasure of our appetites….

Birds, Beasts, and Fishes, agonize under the knife of the most terrible and most unfeeling of all executioners…the pig is to be whipped to death…the turkey is to be crammed against appetite…The whole Creation is to be tortured for thy pleasure, Man! There were a people who received their instruction...from God...they do not abstain from animals, for it was not intended that Man should; but it is a maxim religiously observed among them that the creature that must perish for their food die without agony…

It were better almost to revive the Doctrine of Transmigration and suppose that the souls of our ancestors informed birds, beasts, and fishes than to commit these cruelties under the light of Revelation, which discountenanced those absurd opinions.

The Boston Weekly News-Letter (MA) 1754 09 19 page 1 London. [Gentleman's Magazine]

...There is a little village, about three miles from Market-Downham in Norfolk, called Helgay, situated in a peninsula, which does not consist of above 1000 acres. The inhabitants of this are once in about six or seven years infested with an incredible number of field mice, which would (like locusts) devour their corn of every kind; but, as certain as this visitation happens, a prodigious flight of Norway Owls are sure to arrive and tarry till these mischievous animals are totally destroyed by them. The parishioners (as indeed they are in gratitude bound) pay almost the same veneration to these birds as the Egyptians to the Ibis, and will not at any rate annoy them, which they might easily do, since pigeons are not tamer. They are far more beautiful than ours, and are day-birds; they have pretty long ears, and, in other respects, their heads resemble those of cats. They meddle with nothing but the mice, and constantly return home, as soon as they have executed their business which they are providentially sent to perform....

1756

The Boston Weekly News-Letter 1756 05 13 page 2 Advertisement. Microcosm or, the World in Miniature.

Built in the form of a Roman temple, after twenty-two years close study and application...the whole...is humbly offered to the curious of this city...

Its outward structure is a most beautiful composition of architecture, sculpture

and painting. The inward contents are as judiciously adopted to gratify the ear, the eye and the understanding; for it plays with great exactness several fine pieces of music, and exhibits, by an amazing variety of moving figures, scenes diversified with natural beauties, operations of art, of human employment and diversions, all passing as in real life, &c.

...V. Is a delightful grove, wherein are birds flying, and in many other motions warbling forth their melodious notes, &c. ...

The Pennsylvania Gazette 1756 09 16 page 1 Among the list of books, with remarks, in the *Gentleman's Magazin*e for April, 1756, there are the following directions for shooting flying, taken from a poem called the *Compleat Marksman*, by the Honourable Robert Coot[16]...

…In firing at a covey always confine your aim to one. After the harvest, when the birds are become shy, watch their flight soon after sunset, you will be directed by their call, and the next morning you will know where to find them. When a quail rises, do not be in too much haste to fire during her first flight; her flight is always short, and you may be sure to spring her a second time, when you are aware of her, and better prepared. To shoot larks in frosty weather, load with as much powder as shot, and fire among them as they rise, for their wings being then expanded, you will kill many more than if you fire at them on the ground. Never fire at a mallard till you can get behind him, for no shot can enter his breast…Never blow at the mouth of your piece after it has missed fire, lest some latent spark discharge it through your head. Keep your gun always directed from you, and your thumb on the flint, which you should never hammer, because the sparks may fall into the pan, and kill a bystander.

1757

The Maryland Gazette (MD) 1757 04 21 page 1 The World

There was an ancient sect of philosophers, the disciples of Pythagoras, who held, that the souls of men and all other animals existed in a state of perpetual transmigration; and that, when by death they were dislodged from one corporeal habitation, they were immediately reinstated in another, happier and more miserable, according to their behavior in the former…

All those under the honorable denomination of sportsmen have entertained themselves with the miseries and destruction of innocent animals, may be terrified and murdered in the shapes of hares, partridges and woodcocks; and all those who under the more illustrious title of heroes have delighted in the devastation of their own species, may be massacred by each other in the forms of invincible game-cocks and pertinacious bull-dogs…

It teaches us that the pursued and persecuted fox was once probably some crafty and rapacious minister, who had purchased by his ill-acquired wealth that safety which he cannot now procure by his flight; that the bull, baited with all the cruelties that human ingenuity or human malevolence can invent, was once some relentless tyrant,

who had inflicted all the tortures which he now endures: that the poor bird, blinded, imprisoned, and at last starved to death in a cage, may have been some unforgiving creditor; and the widowed turtle, pining away life for the loss of her mate, some fashionable wife rejoicing at the death of her husband, which her own ill-usage had occasioned…

The Boston Weekly News-Letter (MA) 1757 04 28 page 2 supplement London, February 12.

...It is said that the society for the preservation of game have suspended for this season, the carrying on prosecutions against the industrious and injured farmers, and have turned their thoughts on a nobler object, viz. the preservation of their country. And as there is a prospect of a national militia being raised, they intend to use those guns, which have for long been the bane of innocent birds, to repulse any foreign power which shall be so fool-hardy as to attack us. This will be a quarry befitting Englishmen to boast, instead of relating how many partridges they knock'd down the last year's shooting, and how many families they have reduced to beggary by rigid prosecutions....

The Boston Evening-Post (MA) 1757 10 03 page 1 From a late Political Writer[17]. Of Libels.

Most of our malcontent writers having either made their peace, or their terms, and accordingly changed their warmest satire against some men, into fulsome panegyrics upon the same persons; lest this laudable art of Defaming and Administration should be lost amongst us, I intend to publish the following rules for the use of the novices in this way; by the help of which a writer of the lowest class may become popular under any ministry….

The first and most ancient is the fabulous or allegorical mode, which has often been made use of to convey smart things against courts and court favorites with great success; for the ambiguity or double entendre of a fable raises the curiosity of every reader, to discover the secret sting which it contains, and gratify his chagrin with more than ordinary satisfaction when it is discovered. Besides, here is an eternal recourse for slander to the most malignant author, even of the lowest invention; for what can be easier than to say the same dreadful ill things of beasts, which are daily uttered in coffee houses and clubs against our rational governors? What difficulty is there in metamorphosing a grave Minister of State into a wily Fox, set over an honest flock of sheep to guard them from dogs and vermin; but instead of that, intending nothing but their destruction, and worrying them to death? In the same manner, and with no less ease, a courtier will make a good spaniel, fawning upon his master for a bone or a crust of bread; by which no body will fail to understand a pension or a place; The lion in the forest will do very well for king, and the jack-all for his thief favorite. The same may be done with birds, or fish, or even inanimate things, whom they have full liberty, upon these occasions, to endow with the gift of speech....

The New-Hampshire Gazette (NH) 1757 11 11 page 2 London.

August 25. The Duke of Newcastle's gamekeeper, at Claremont and a neighboring baker, being a shooting together, and on opposite sides of a thick hedge, out of which the birds sprung, fired together, and each shot the other; the gamekeeper was mortally wounded, and the other slightly.

1758

The New-Hampshire Gazette (NH) 1758 06 16 page 4 A Hymn in a Spring Morning

See! how the fair creation round
  Shines with new beauty bright,

…

Hark! how the birds on ev'ry bough
  Their warbling music pour
And in their artless melody
  Salute the happy hour.
O blessed Creator! May my hymn,
  In this bright spring of day,
Express the ardour of my soul,
  And grateful homage pay.

…

While this blest truth, that thou art love,
  Swells the symphonious lays,
And all the heavens in thunder shake
  With shouts of rapt'rous praise.
My God! thou beauty's radiant source,
  Inspire my breast with love;
Tune my rapt soul with gratitude,
  And all its music move.

The Boston Weekly Advertiser (MA) 1758 06 26 page 1 Considerations upon war, upon cruelty in general, and religious cruelty in particular; In several letters and essays. To which are added, essays on divers other subjects, and an oration in praise of deceit[18]. 8 vo. p 496. Price 5 s.

The principal design of some of these essays is to set cruelty, and unnecessary war, so nearly allied to it, in that detestable light, in which vices, that are the great scandal of human nature, ought to be placed. After treating of war and cruelty in general, that great branch of the latter religious cruelty, is taken into consideration: 'A branch (to use our author's words) bringing forth poisonous fruit, upon which such numbers of unclean birds build their nests, could not well escape notice…but what provocation can any man or body of men pretend, or what excuse can they find, for exercising the most

horrible cruelties upon others, only because they worship the Divine Being according to the dictates of their consciences…Although the first promulgation of the gospel was peace on earth, and good-will toward men; yet the original design of christianity hath been so perverted, that this religion has occasioned the greatest hatred, and most bloody persecutions, wars, and massacres, that ever appeared in the world…none hath done this so constantly and furiously, and with such a diabolical rage, as the Church of Rome"....

To these letters succeeds the first essay concerning cruelty and war; which is divided into four sections, the first of which treats of cruelty proceeding from natural temper, and exercised for diversion or sport. 'From what (the author asks) but a cruel temper, can it principally proceed that so great a part of our diversions are no better than so many acts of barbarity? Men not contented with hunting the wild inhabitants of the forests, woods, and fields (almost all of whom in country are very harmless) and frequently putting them for many hours in the utmost terror, and causing them to strain every nerve to escape the savage fury of their pursuers (who at last kill them if they can)…Men of this savage temper, not satisfied with these cruelties exercised on the brute creation, take great pleasure in feeling their own species wounded, mangle, and murdered too for their diversion…'

'The extreme fondness of the ancient Romans for the barbarous spectacles of beast fighting with beast, men with beasts, and with one another, and at a time too when they were esteemed the politest nation in the world, is really astonishing…'

1759

Green & Russell's Boston Post-Boy & Advertiser (MA) 1759 02 12 page 1
London, October 20 (widely reprinted)

...One day last week a very odd as well as melancholy accident happened in the Isle of Angleasea: Three gentlemen were out together a partridge shooting, two of them being on one side of a hedge, and the third on the other, when suddenly sprung up a large covey of partridges: the two gentlemen were close to the hedge, and not suspecting their companion was within shot (having seen him scarce a minute before on the farther side of the field) one of them fired at the birds; and the person on the other side firing at the same instant, both their pieces made but one report, and they shot each other; one died upon the spot; the other is very much wounded but likely to recover. The unfortunate persons were brothers, the eldest not 22, and the youngest scarce 19 years of age.

Green & Russell's Boston Post-Boy & Advertiser (MA) 1759 08 13 page 3
Philadelphia, 20th July 1759.

Messrs Green & Russell, I observed in your Paper no. 100 that there has been (as you justly term it) an awful Providence lately among you[19], this has surprised many among us, and induced me to inform you that we have had for these several days past a bird flying over the city every morning crying out distinctly, Repent, Repent, it appears

not unlike a parrot, one of its feet and its bill like that birds; the other a stump without talons; its color dark blue, and about the size of a pigeon. Several of the youth of this city have frequently fired at it, but to no purpose, and though it has sometimes alighted within pistol shot of them, they though well charged with pigeon shot could not even frighten it, much less kill it. This to a worldly minded man may seem an old woman's tale, but the thinking serious part of us, of all denominations, think otherwise.

The New-York Gazette (NY) 1759 12 03 page 3 Advertisement. James Barnard, Inn holder from London

> ...N.B. Said James Barnard begs leave to inform the Public, that he has to dispose of, a large collection of canary birds, in full plumage and song; and those gentlemen, or ladies, that has some time since spoken to him for canary birds, by favoring him with a line where they may be sent, may now be supplied.

1760

The Maryland Gazette 1760 01 03 page 1 Verses occasioned by the success of the British Arms in the year 1759 (James Sterling, uncredited)

> Shall echoing joys through all the land rebound,
> And roaring cannon shake the trembling ground
> Shall th' ambient air be fill'd with jovial cries,
> And noisy transports pierce the distant skies,
> Shall every place with gratulation ring,
> And shall the Muse alone forbear to sing?
> Shall she be silent midst the joyous throng,
> "Nor tune her voice, nor elevate her song?"
> Louisburg reduced and Quebec subdued,
> Our rights and liberties at length secured
> …
> But say, lamented Wolfe, for you can tell
> What glory's theirs, who for their country fell;
> How British souls, with Roman souls unite,
> Congenial shining in effulgence bright.
> How Cato with eternal laurels crowned,
> Brutus in endless liberty enthroned,
> Incircled with heroes, an awful train,
> Who, in defense of native rights, were slain
> …
> The Planter there amidst his swarthy slaves,
> Proscribes the ground where yet the forest waves;
> The slaves obedient to their Lord's decree,
> The keen edged ax apply to every tree;
> Redoubled blows through all the wood resound,
> Redoubled blows the neighboring woods rebound;
> The forest nods and trembles at the sound,

And cracking, rattling tumbles to the ground.
The trees now prostrate, all their glories fade,
Their branching honors, once a grateful shade,
Laid low on earth, a dreary thicket gloom
No more to rise, and never again to bloom.
The parent birds forsake their downy nests,
Their cares all fluttering in their little breasts,
Perch on the neighboring trees, or wing the skies,
Bemoan their helpless young, in doleful cries.
But cease, my Muse, act a more generous part,
Nor wound, with plaintive tales, the tender heart;
Perhaps too soon, thy mournful lays may flow,
And weep some friends in elegiac woe,
Or if thy wings, with satyr fledged, shall rise
Some fool or knave or hypocrite chastise;
But here, 'tis thine to touch the pleasing string,
And grateful strains in cheerful notes to sing.
The Muse rebuked, attends the Planters' cares,
Nor minds the silvans groans nor heeds their tears;
By skillful slaves, the entangled boughs are cropped,
And from their trunks, the cleaving limbs are lopped,
A waste of wood, in wild confusion spread,
Is strewn promiscuous o'er its native bed
But lays not long, burnt with destructive fire,
The heaps collected, in a blaze expire.
And now the ground, with art and labor cleared
For culture by his laboring host prepared,
The planter views, his crops before him rise,
And future riches sparkle in his eyes
…
Now a hunter, he seeks the adjacent woods,
A fowler now, he haunts the neighboring floods;
There, fish of various kinds afford delight,
Amuse his hours, and feast his appetite.
See, the sheep, a luscious victim lies,
Ordained for food, his plenteous meal supplies
…
See yon field with nodding harvest clothed,
This laid in grass, in that tobacco stored;
Source of his wealth, first object of his cares,
The favored plant with tender art he rears,
And nicely curious, crops each growing shoot,
Nor suffers baneful weeds to approach the root.
In vain the budworm weaves its silken web,
Nor rests the envenomed insect in her bed;
Crushed by his hands, the noxious vermin dies,

And at his feet a wretched victim lies.
The hornworm next, his vengeful rage assails,
Nor aught its stiff extended horn avails;
Plucked from the juicy plant, submits to fate,
Though gorged with plenty, dies perhaps too late;
His greedy jaws soon rib the spreading leaves,
Elude the master's care, and all his hope deceives.
  Thus, when devouring wolves have seized the herd,
Which late the fond shepherd with joy surveyed,
Big with the prospect of the increasing young,
And numbered growing riches yet to come,
One sad night his pleasing hope deceives,
His prospects vanish and he madly grieves.
  But foes repelled, all noxious insects gone,
And the ripe plant to full perfection grown,
Now leaves the field, and from inclement skies
To the hospitable roof's protection flies;
Whence cured, and neatly packed and prized with care,
Attending ships receive their freighted fare,
And wafted by these to Britannia's shore,
Adds to the master's wealth, increasing store
  See the maize [Indian corn] in extended rows arise,
Shoot out a thousand silks of various dyes
…
  Indians no more their savage war shall wage,
Nor Britons blood shall glut their cruel rage;
No more shall mangled carcasses be found,
By vultures torn, or strewed upon the ground;
Mothers no more shall weep their children gone,
Nor fond husbands their ravished wives bemoan;
No more shall Christian scape their pride adorn,
Grace their triumphs, or their warriors crown
….
  Oh! Were my lines like Addison's inspired,
And were my lays, like his, divinely fired,
Or if Apollo tuned herself my notes,
And bid my warbling numbers run like Pope's
…
But such wonders, alas! Confound my lays,
Strike dumb my Muse, or transcend her praise;
Confined to woods, and used to rural scenes,
She dares not rise in such exalted strains.

1761

The Boston Evening-Post 1761 10 12 page 3 Extract of a letter from New

York, dated October 5 (widely circulated)

...Last Thursday evening, as two lads belonging to Charlestown were returning home with a gun which they had loaded to kill birds and a negro in company belonging to Mr. Caleb Call, of the same place, one of them imprudently pointed the gun at the negro, not minding it was cocked, when it went off and killed him on the spot.

1762

The Pennsylvania Gazette (PA) 1762 11 11 page 4 Advertisement. Benjamin Jackson and Company

> Continue their business, as usual; and will want a large supply of mustard seed... The best method is as follows, viz. after choosing a suitable spot, which should be rich, plow it twice or three times and harrow it in order to mellow it and kill the weeds, then sow it about as thick as for turnips or a little thicker, making an allowance for what the small birds will probably get…

1763

The New Hampshire Gazette and Historical Chronicle (NH) 1763 03 31 page 3 An Essay in Praise of Agriculture

Agriculture began with our world, and was the employment of its first inhabitant, who was to get his bread in the sweat of his face….It is no wonder, Agriculture has been the business and amusement of the world in every age and part of it…Happiness seems to have fixed her seat in rural scenes: The assembly, the lighted room, the equipage, the embroidery, do not sooth and entertain the mind of man in any degree like the verdant plain, the wavy field, the artless stream, the enameled mead, the fragrant grove, the melodious birds, the sportive beasts, the open sky and starry heavens....

The New Hampshire Gazette and Historical Chronicle (NH) 1763 06 24 page 2 Portsmouth. Upon Wheat.

…In the latter end of August or in the beginning of September, the ground may be plowed, and the wheat sowed and harrowed in; or the ground may be harrowed first, then the seed sowed and plowed in, which will best secure the wheat from being picked up by pigeons and other birds....

The New Hampshire Gazette and Historical Chronicle (NH) 1763 08 26 page 1

We are desired to publish the following piece at this time of the year, with a view that persons who have straggling stalks of hemp growing on their ground, may be put in mind of saving all the seed they possibly can, against next spring, either to sow themselves, or to supply others with, who are determined to make a trial of raising that necessary and profitable plant....

Great care must be taken to preserve the seed, by flaps or otherwise from the birds, and must be weeded if required....[20]

The New-York Gazette (NY) 1763 08 29 page 1 A law for affixing all kinds of victuals to be set to sale in the public markets of this city. [*Common Council*, August 24, 1763] (widely circulated)

> ...And the prices of poultry, as well wild fowl, as tame, shall not exceed the respective rates herein annexed to the names of the several species or sorts; to wit,
>
> ...For a Dozen of wild pigeons: Eighteen pence; and in the like proportion for a greater or less number.
> For a Quail, One penny Halfpenny;
> For a Heath-hen, Fifteen pence;
> For a Patridge, One shilling,
> For a Black Duck, or other Wild Duck, of the larger sort, One shilling.
> For a Teal, or other Wild-Fowl of the smallest sort, Six pence.
> For a large Wild Cock-Turkey, Five shillings.
> For a large Wild Hen-Turkey, Three shillings and a six pence.
> For a Wild Cock Chicken-Turkey, Two shillings and six pence.
> For a Wild Hen Chicken-Turkey, One shilling and nine-pence.
> For a large Wild Goose, Two shillings.
> For a Wild Goose not full grown, Eighteen-pence.
> For a Brandt, Fifteen-pence.
> For Snipes of the largest sort by the dozen, Fifteen-pence; and in that proportion for a greater or smaller number.
> For Snipes of the smaller sort and other small birds by the dozen, six pence.... and after that rate for a greater or smaller number....

1764

The Massachusetts Gazette and Boston News-Letter (MA) 1764 07 12 page 1 supplement On Vocal Music by W.B.

Nature has given to man the first and finest of all instruments in his own frame: who is he that shall pretend to say when and in what country music first saw its origins?…

As the sweetest of all musical sounds is the human voice, so the highest glory of the arts is the directing and accompanying it, the following its modulations and expressing the sense of those words in which it adds meaning to melody. The introducing of this into music is the triumph of the human voice alone: the music of the birds; the notes of the sweetest instruments, are but dead sounds; they tinkle in the ear but they convey no appropriated Idea.

The Massachusetts Gazette and Boston News-Letter (MA) 1764 09 27 page 3 Boston, Sept. 27 (widely reprinted)

...On Monday last in the afternoon, a very sorrowful accident happened in Cross Street, at the north part of the town: Two lads playing in a chamber with a gun, not knowing it to be loaded, presented it out of the window, to snap it, the gun went off, and the shot entered into a neighboring window, near which several women were sitting at a tea table; one of them, Mrs. Wheaton, a widow, was shot in the head in such a manner that she expired in three hours after, another was considerably wounded in the back part of her head, but not mortally; a third was slightly touched each side of her head by some of the shot which scattered. It is said this gun had been loaded with duck shot about 5 months; the person who used it last, returned from fowling with it loaded, emptied the pan of the priming, and then laid it by, and never was meddled with until this shocking occurrence happened.

It is not improper to caution people who are fond of gunning, to be more careful than they generally are, it being a practice for many to keep their guns loaded, if they have not had an opportunity of firing at game, imagining that no person will ever meddle therewith, until they have occasion to use it themselves, by which means we have so frequent transactions of such unhappy consequences.

We would just add, that there is a bad practice of allowing servants, and even children, some of whom have scare strength to carry a gun, and less discretion in using one, to go in the Common and on Boston-Neck to fire at small Birds:—Certainly it concerns every one to use every method to prevent these practices, as the lives of persons are often in imminent danger, through the carelessness of such people.—There is a Law of the Province against such proceedings, which ought to be as rigorously executed as some are against crimes of less heinous nature…

1765

The Pennsylvania Gazette (PA) 1765 02 07 page 2. New York. January 28 (widely reprinted).

...The late severe weather having destroyed great numbers of birds, and seeming to threaten an extinction of the species of several sorts, at least for some years to come, in these part, especially Quails, we hear several gentlemen have caught and purchased considerable numbers of them, which they keep in cages, properly sheltered from the cold, and feed, in order to set them at liberty in the spring, to preserve the breed....

The Maryland Gazette (MD) 1765 02 14 page 1. The spirit of contradiction: A tale by R. Lloyd, M.A. (widely circulated)

The very silliest things in life
Create the most material strife:
What scarce would suffer a debate,
Will oft produce the bitterest hate,
It is you say—I say ‘tis not.

—Why you grow warm—and I grow hot;
Thus each alike with passion glows,
And words come first, and after blows.
  Friend Jerkin had an income clear,
Some fifteen pounds, or more, a year,
And rented, on the farming plan,
Grounds at much greater sums per ann.
A man of consequence, no doubt,
‘Mongst all his neighbours round about:
He was of frank and open mind,
Too honest to be much refin’d;
Would smoke his pipe, and tell his tale,
Sing a good song, and drink his ale.
  His wife was of another mould;
Her age was neither young nor old;
Her features strong, but somewhat plain,
Her air not bad, but rather vain;
Her temper neither new nor strange,
A woman’s, very apt to change;
What she most hated was conviction,
What she most lov’d flat contradiction.
  A charming house wife ne’ertheless;
—Tell me a thing she could not dress;
Soups, hashes, pickles, puddings, pies,
Nought came amiss—she was so wise:
For she, bred twenty miles from town,
Had brought a world of breeding down;
And Cumberland had seldom seen
A farmer’s wife with such a mein;
She could not bear the sound of Dame;
—No—Mistress Jerkin was her name.
She could harangue with wond’rous grace
On gowns and mobs, and caps and lace;
But though she ne’er adorn’d his brows,
She had a vast contempt for spouse,
As being one who took no pride,
And was a deal too countrify’d.
Such were our couple, man and wife,
Such were their means and ways of life.
  Once on a time, the season fair,
For exercise and cheerful air,
It happen’d, in his morning roam,
He kill’d his birds, and brought them home.
“—Here, Cicely, take away my gun—
“How shall we have these Starlings done?
—Done! what, my Love, your wits are wild;

Starlings, my dear; they're Thrushes, child.
Nay now but look, consider wife,
"They're Starlings—No, upon my life;
Sure I can judge as well as you,
I know a Thrush and Starling too.
"Who was it shot them, you or I?
"They're Starling"—Thrushes— "Zounds, you lie."
Pray, Sir, take back your dirty word,
I scorn your language as your bird;
It ought to make a husband blush,
To treat a wife so 'bout a Thrush.
"Thrush, Cicely!"—Yes— "A Starling"—No.
The lie again, and then a blow.
Blows carry strong and quick conviction,
And mar the pow'rs of contradiction.
  Peace soon ensu'd, and all was well,
It were imprudence to rebel,
Or keep the ball up of debate
Against these arguments of weight.
  A year roll'd on in perfect ease,
'Twas as you like, and what you please;
Till in its course and order due,
Came March the twentieth, fifty-two;
Quoth Cicely, this charming life,
No tumults now, no blows, no strife.
What fools we were this day last year!
Lord, how you beat me then, my dear.
—Sure it was idle and absurd
To wrangle so about a bird;
A bird not worth a single rush—
"A Starling"—No, my love, a Thrush.
That I'll maintain— "that I'll deny."
—You're wrong, good Husband— "Wife, you lie."
  Again the self-same wrangle rose,
Again the lie—again the blows.
Thus ev'ry year (true man and wife)
Ensues the same domestic strife,
Thus ev'ry year their quarrel ends,
They argue, fight, and buss, and friends;
'Tis Starling, Thrush, and Thrush, and Starling;
You Dog, you B—; my Dear, my Darling.

The New Hampshire Gazette and Historical Chronicle (NH) 1765 03 22 page 1
Upon Hemp, continued

…As soon as this is done, let the field be harrowed very lightly, and well defended

from birds. There is no feed of which small birds are so fond as hemp; it is large and conspicuous, so that it attracts their eye, and it is to be slightly covered, so that they can easily get at it. Boys must be set to watch, and all imaginable care taken of it for several days after sowing, otherwise the farmer, with all his former cautions, will have but a poor account....

The Boston Post-Boy & Advertiser (MA) 1765 06 17 page 3 Advertisement.

> Wanted, three pair Wood Ducks, one pair of Mock Birds, and one pair of Rackoons. For a purchaser, inquire of Green & Russell, in Queen-street.

1767

The New Hampshire Gazette and Historical Chronicle (NH) 1767 01 02 page 2 January. A Herepial Poem.

...The year begins with January's cold,
By frost's severest wintery's rage controlled
…
When, in one waste, unjoyous nature lies,
A prey to winter, and inclement skies;
When artful toils for starving birds are laid,
And every herb and every plant's decayed
…
When, borne on Zephyr's wings, no odors rise,
Nor larks melodious tempt the angry skies;
No sylvan pipe inspires the cotted vale,
Nor echo warbles to the ambient gale…

The Pennsylvania Chronicle and Universal Advertiser (PA) 1767 02 23 page 4. A Winter's Thought

> The man whose constitution's strong,
> And free from vexing care his mind,
> As changing seasons pass along,
> Can in them all a pleasure find
> …
>
> In the morning fair, and evening mild,
> The murmuring brook and cooling shade,
> The notes of birds in concert wild
> And Philomela's serenade
> …
>
> The shining pavement of the flood,
> To which the youthful tribes resort,
> And game, which the discovered wood

Exposes to the fowler's sport….

The New-York Journal; or The General Advertiser (NY) 1767 04 02 page 1 supplement. London, December 23

...We hear that a tax will be laid on lap-dogs and singing birds....

The Virginia Gazette (VA) 1767 04 23 page 2 Extract of a letter from Disley, in Cheshire, Jan. 31. (widely circulated)

"Thank God the frost is gone...the poor birds have suffered most…last Tuesday two crows fell upon a magpie, which they killed and devoured in the sight of many people."

The Pennsylvania Gazette (PA) 1767 09 17 page 1 Hague, July 4.

His serene highness, the Stadtholder, being hunting the heron a few days since, near his country seat of Loo, he took one with a brass ring on his claws, bearing an inscription, that this bird was chased and taken, in 1737, by the late Elector of Cologne[21].

The Pennsylvania Gazette (PA) 1767 11 19 page 3 Flew away on Tuesday, the 17th instant A MOCKING BIRD.

Whoever has catched such a Bird, by bringing it to the PRINTERS hereof, shall have TWENTY SHILLINGS Reward.

1768

The Massachusetts Gazette and Boston News-Letter (MA) 1768 02 25 page 1 supplement. Further Advices by Capt. Jenkins from London: viz Portsmouth Jan 15. (widely circulated)

The snow is so deep and the frost so severe…the birds flock into the town, nay into the houses for shelter, giving up liberty to preserve a little life.

The Virginia Gazette (VA) 1768 11 03 page 4 The lamentation of a young lady for the loss of her favorite bird, by Caledoniensis.

O woeful day! a day of woe to me!
And, wretch I, who live this day to see!
When that dear bird, the pleasure of my eyes,
Robbed of its precious life before me lies.
Confounded be each noxious mouse and rat,
Which makes us in our houses keep a cat;
That cruel quadruped, whose claws and teeth
Have thrown my charmer to devouring death.
And thou, O death! What fault had it incurr'd,

That made thee feast upon my darling bird?
Enough of prey, methinks, thou might'st have found,
'Mong men, beasts, birds, fish, insects, all around;
Why then so greedy as to seize a prey
Whose death, from me, drives joy and health away!
  O lovely bird! still lovely, though now dead!
Among the sweetest flowers thou shalt be laid;
I'll wash thy corpse with tears and still rehearse
Thy boundless praise in sublimating verse.
Ye hills and mountains, rivers, flowery plains,
Attend my words and echo back my strains;
Assist, ye winds, that from four quarters rise,
And through the world rehearse my dismal sighs;
From pole to pole resound this mournful tale,
My bird is dead, and tell how I bewail;
For death, which killed my bird, can only cure
The pains and anguish which I now endure.
  How oft, O bird! didst thou alone perceive
The sigh which made my conscious bosom heave?
How oft didst thou my secret wishes hear,
Which never yet have reached another ear?
How oft did I, with joy, to thee I part
The soft sensations of my glowing heart?
But now, alas! my wonted joy is fled.
My darling, chirping, fluttering songster's dead;
And I, o'erwhelmed with heavy grief and woe,
Can't tell the sorrows that I undergo;
Both day and night I sigh, and mourn, and rave,
And will persist until I find my grave.

1769

The Virginia Gazette (VA) 1769 04 13 page 4 An Ode on the return of SPRING 1769.

The boisterous Borea now is fled.
In northern oceans hides his head;
The spring approaches, mild and fair,
And doth the face of nature cheer:
  When birds begin to sing and woo,
  Let's join them, and be jovial too.

...

Hear how the birds, with mutual love,
And tender notes, make sweet the grove;
All things with harmony seem crown'd,

Mirth, joy, and happiness, go round:
When thus all Nature sounds one note,
Refuse not, O my soul, thy vote.

His praise exalt, with cheerful voice,
Who makes all Nature thus rejoice;
Be always first among the throng,
Each morn, to raise to him thy song;
And nightly, when the world's at rest,
To end his praise, be thou the last.

The Virginia Gazette (VA) 1769 06 01 page 5 England notes

March 23. On Saturday a Lady of great distinction made a present to John Wilkes, Esq; of a pair of curious canary birds in elegant cages. The instant they were set on the table before the patriot they began to sing, but alas! the chant was not sweet liberty[22]."

1770

The Pennsylvania Gazette (PA) 1770 07 26 page 2 Boston, July 12

On Sunday last the greatest number of canker-worms appeared in several pastures in this town, that have been known these twenty years past.

The canker-worms have done great damage in some country towns, not only in this province by in New-Hampshire and Rhode-Island: They come up from the earth in swarms and devour the grass in a prodigious manner; when they have destroyed one pasture, they travel to another, passing the roads, and going over fences, walls, and houses: the people of the country have been obliged to dig trenches around their fields to keep them out; and have been obliged to tar their houses, as some of the worms have got into their rooms and beds. It has been observed that when the grass has been mowed, to prevent their destroying the whole, the heat of the sun makes them uneasy; and have bit several people that were at work bare-foot, but their bite, though smart, is not venomous.

The Boston Gazette and Country Journal (MA) 1770 08 06 Page 1 supplement. To the Farmers of the several Counties of the Province of New-York by J.P., a farmer, at Huntington in Long Island. [*New-York Gazette* July 30, 1770] (widely circulated)

Gentlemen, Is it not time now, for you to rouse from your lethargy and view the impending ruin which hangs over your heads, ere it burst upon you like a torrent, when you will be forever unable to extricate yourselves from it?—My dear countrymen, the New Yorkers have betrayed us, betrayed us did I say! nay they have sold us! and are now actually entailing the Curse of Slavery on us and on our children, together with all the inhabitants of America, born and unborn! …

Withdraw all your produce—slop your cattle and sheep which filled their markets

with so great plenty—suffer your fish to rest unmolested in their shoals;—let your timber stand, from which they have hitherto been supplied with fuel, for a shelter for the birds of the air, who will return you their thanks in melodious songs….

The Boston Evening-Post (MA) 1770 08 13 page 2 Portsmouth, New Hampshire Aug 10. (widely reprinted)

…The canker worms are mostly gone, they have been devoured by swine, birds, and even the fish taken in the rivers and ponds have been found full of them….

The New-London Gazette (CT) 1770 10 19 page 1

The following account, relating to the death of Rev. Mr. Smith, which is inserted at the desire of some of his friends, has been postponed for some weeks past, in order to collect as many circumstances as possible relating to that unhappy affair; and to have them properly authenticated.

We have received the following further account of the circumstances attending the unfortunate death of the Rev. Mr. Charles Jeffery Smith, on Friday the 10th of August, mentioned in the New York Journal of the 16th, viz. That having mentioned his design of going out to shoot some birds to be dressed for dinner, and having performed his family devotion as usual, he desired Mrs. Smith to hasten breakfast, that he might not be too late. And after having prepared his gun and ammunition, power, bird shot, &c and breakfasted, he filled his pipe, and while he was smoking, took a turn in the garden, where Mrs. Smith met him, and after a short space he took notice that it was time to go, they came in together, he took his gun, &c and immediately went out, which was about 9 o'clock in the morning…Mr. Smith told [his neighbor] the was going down to the shore in order to shoot snipes…[A] servant after some time found him dead in the wood and carried the fatal news to Mrs. Smith….They found him lying on his back, shot in the breast…A remarkably serious turn of mind and deportment, together with a backwardness of speech, occasioned by an impediment, to which he was sometimes subject, gave rise in the neighborhood, to a suspicion that he labored under a melancholy disorder…This supposition was so prevalent that upon the news of his death, before his body was seen, or the circumstances known, it was by some suspected, that he destroyed himself…But it appears by undeniable evidence that this report…was entirely false…

The Connecticut Courant (CT) 1770 11 06 page 4. Letter from "Farmer" (widely reprinted)

Yesterday…I amused myself in walking in a neighboring grove, very pleasant in its situation, attended by the sweet music of various and beautiful birds, echoing their harmonious notes through the wood. But soon their music was turned into silence, and my joy into mourning, for I saw many people with their heads bowed down, sorrow in their faces, and every eye running down with tears. Amazed at the sight, I ran with haste to know the cause of their grief, and asking them why they wept? one said, "O! Sir, art thou a stranger to these shades? hast thou not heard of the fall of Liberty?...

The Virginia Gazette (VA) 1771 06 20 page 4 An Invitation to the Feathered Race (by Richard Graves, uncredited)

Again the balmy Zephyr blows,
  Fresh verdure decks the grove,
Each bird with vernal rapture glows,
  And tunes his notes to love.
Ye gentle warblers, hither fly,
  And shun the noon-tide heat;
My shrubs a cooling shade supply,
  My groves a safe retreat.
Here freely hop from spray to spray,
  Or weave the mossy nest;
Here rove and sing the live-long day,
  At night here sweetly rest.
Amidst this cool translucent rill,
  That trickles down the glade,
Here bathe your plumes, here drink your fill,
  And revel in the shade.
No schoolboy rude, to mischief prone,
  E'er shews his ruddy face,
Or twangs his bow, or hurls a stone
  In this sequestered place.
Hither the vocal Thrush repairs,
  Secure the Linnet sings,
The Goldfinch dreads no slimy snares,
  To clog her painted wings.
Sad Philomel! ah quit thy haunt,
  Yon distant woods among,
And round my friendly grotto chaunt
  Thy sweetly-plaintive song.
Let not the harmless Red-breast fear,
  Domestic bird, to come
And seek a sure asylum here,
  With one that loves his home.
My trees for you, ye artless tribe,
  Shall store of fruit preserve,
Oh let me thus your friendship bribe
  Come feed without reserve.
For you these cherries I protect,
  To you these plums belong,
Sweet is the fruit that you have picked
  But sweeter far your song[23]
Let then this pledge betwixt us made

Our mutual interests guard,
Mine be the gift of fruit and shade,
Your songs be my reward.

The Virginia Gazette (VA) 1771 10 17 page 1 August 5

...A few days since the most curious collection that perhaps has been before seen together, consisting of every species of wild and tame fowls, with small birds of every sort, that this kingdom produces, said to be a present to the Empress of Russia, was shipped for Petersburg. They were enclosed in a sort of cages, curiously lined, in order to prevent them from hurting themselves in the passage.

The Virginia Gazette (VA) 1771 10 24 page 1 Extract of a letter from a friend and inhabitant of Windsor, dated July 25th; or, News extraordinary from a very extraordinary place.

...On Wednesday morning a detachment of the horse and life guards, King's Watermen, Mr. Jonas, and the celebrated Mr. Breslaw, the inimitable Mr. James Moss, the famous Whistler, the completest mimic of birds every known, and likewise curiously skilled in the cat and dog language, so as to introduce an agreeable skirmish between two cats and two dogs, in order to heighten the diversion of the audience, made their appearance....

1772

The Pennsylvania Packet and the General Advertiser (PA) 1772 01 13 page 2 Advertisement

Literary Intelligence Extraordinary. Speeding will be published, the following four new political tracts. All written by the celebrated John Wilkes, Esq.

1. A vindication of her Royal Highness the Princess Dowager of Wales, from the indecent and illiberal invectives of the North Briton, and other party writers. Dedicated (by permission) to the Carlton-House Junto.

2. The danger, sin, and folly of giving the lie to the Lord's Anointed, proving the same also to be highly indecent and illiberal. A sermon from the following text: "Think not evil of the King, neither speak it even in thy chamber, for the birds of the air shall reveal it, and that which hath wings shall bear it to his ear."

N.B. This was written some years ago, for the use of the Rev. Dr. Wilson, and preached by him before their Majesties at the Chapel-Royal.…

The Pennsylvania Packet and the General Advertiser (PA) 1772 02 17 page 1 The Young Owl

A young owl, who had seen himself in a crystal fountain, and who thought himself more beautiful (I cannot say, than the light of the sun; for that to him was very disagreeable, but) than night itself, would often be saying, I have sacrificed

to the Graces; when I was born, Venus put her girdle round me; the wanton loves, followed by smiles and pleasures, are perpetually caressing me. It is time that Hymen should give me children, as beautiful as myself., to be the delight of the night and the ornament of our groves. What pity would it be, if the most accomplished race of birds should be lost! happy the spouse who is to spend her life with me! Full of these thoughts, he sends the crow in embassy, to propose a match between him and the royal daughter of the eagle. With much ado the crow was persuaded to undertake this business; I shall never be welcome, said she, when I come to propose so unequal a match. Do you think that the eagle, who can soar upwards, and gaze on the sun, will marry you, who cannot so much as open your eyes, whilst it is day light? This would be the means of your never being together; one would be abroad all the day, the other all the night. The self-conceited owl was deaf to all the crow could urge, who, to satisfy him, at last went and proposed a match between him and the young eagle, and was well laughed at for her pains. The eagle, however, sent word back to the owl, that if he had a mind to be her son-in-law, he must come and salute her on the morrow, after sun-rising, in the middle of the aerial element. The presumptuous owl undertook it, but dazzled by the rays of the sun, he fell from his height upon a rock: all the birds pursued him, and plucked his feathers off; and he was at last happy, in being able to hide himself. Some time after, he took to wife a young owl, whom he espoused by night, and thinking one another beautiful and agreeable, lived very contentedly together.—We must not be self-conceited, nor aim at honors which we never were designed for.

The Pennsylvania Packet and the General Advertiser (PA) 1772 03 09 page 1 supplement. The Farmer and Pigeon: A Fable. by Dione.

...Look round, my friend, how hard the case,
That innocence should meet disgrace;
That virtue oft suspected lies,
Whilst vice assumes a close disguise
…
I'll therefore beg to tell a tale;
When birds could speak in former days,
(For sure you'll trust what Aesop says)
A farmer then, as farmers now,
With careful labor sought his plough
…
Supris'd he finds a barren soil,
No plenteous blessings crown his toil;
An envious crow whose haunt was nigh,
Had viewed the grain with longing eye;
Resolv'd to taste the precious food,
He vows no carrion half so good.
Then pecks and brings a friend to share;
So mocks the peasant's humble care.
On dainties revels all the night,
But fearful shuns th' approach of light;

For crows, as well as man, they say,
Were then ashamed to steal by day
The farmer pines with inward grief,
And vows revenge against the thief.
In vain each wily scheme he tries,
Which rage could prompt or art devise;
In vain—til some malicious tongue,
Whisper'd the pigeon did the wrong.

Strait he applies to lawyer owl,
A learned and sagacious fowl :
Of manners grave, of thoughtful look,
Had studied Littleton and Coke.
Could solve each dubious quirk in law,
And knotty inferences draw
From what he read, or what he saw.
The rustic tells his woeful case,
Impatient claims a quick redress;
The lawyer thinks the matter clear,
And cites the pigeon to appear.
The day was fix'd, the parties met,
The magpies for a jury set:
With phiz profound each point they scan,
You'd really think, they copied man:
The court was hush'd, the plaintiff rose,
First kiss'd the book, then states the cause:
Depos'd, his early hopes were crost,
His ground was spoil'd, his labour lost;
With due submission pray'd the court,
Would straightway find him guilty for't.
The pigeon call'd, with sighs and tears,
Aloud his innocence declares;
Was sure some envious lie was feign'd,
That foes his character had stain'd,
And humbly hop'd from his relation,
The bench would clear his reputation.
But all his oaths and pleas were vain,
'Twas still alledg'd he lov'd the grain:
'Twas prov'd he had been known to eat,
And call it a delicious meat.

Who pilfers once, we all agree,
For ever will suspected be.
The partial court, (how hard the lot!)
Dooms the defendant to be shot.
Secure the guilty traitor lies;
Condemn'd to fate the pigeon dies.

The Pennsylvania Packet and the General Advertiser (PA) 1772 04 20 page 1 Advertisement

A collection of preserved North American birds to be disposed of. Enquire of the printer.

The Massachusetts Gazette and Boston Post-Boy and the Advertiser (MA) 1772 04 27 page 1 On Cruelty to Animals[24]

Take not away the life you cannot give,
For all things have an equal right to live.

I cannot think it extravagant to imagine, that mankind are no less in proportion accountable for the ill use of their dominion over creatures of the lower rank of beings, than for the exercise of tyranny over their own species. The more entirely the inferior creation is submitted to our power, the more answerable we should seem for our mismanagement of it; and the rather, as the very condition of nature renders these creatures incapable of receiving any recompence in another life for their ill treatment in this.

It is observable of those noxious animals, which have qualities most powerful to injure us, that they naturally avoid mankind, and never hurt us unless provoked or necessitated by hunger. Man, on the other hand seeks out and pursues even the most inoffensive animals on purpose to persecute and destroy them.

Montaigne thinks it some reflection upon human nature itself, that few people take delight in seeing beasts caress or play together, but almost every one is pleased to see them lacerate and worry one another. I am sorry this temper is become almost a distinguishing character of our own nation, from the observation which is made by foreigners of our beloved pastimes, bear-baiting, cock-fighting, and the like. We should find it hard to vindicate the destroying of any thing that has life, merely out of wantonness; yet in this principle our children are bred up, and one of the first pleasures we allow them, is the licence of inflicting pain upon poor animals; almost as soon as we are sensible what life is ourselves, we make it our sport to take it from other creatures. I cannot but believe a very good use might be made of the fancy which children have for birds and insects. Mr. Locke takes notice of a mother who permitted them to her children, but rewarded or punished them as they treated them well or ill. This was no other than entering them betimes into a daily exercise of humanity, and improving their very diversion to a virtue.

I fancy too, some advantage might be taken of the common notion, that it is ominous or unlucky to destroy some sorts of birds, as swallows or martins; this opinion might possibly arise from the confidence these birds seem to put in us by building under our roofs, so that it is a kind of violation of the laws of hospitality, to murder them. As for robin-red-breasts in particular, it is not improbable they owe their security to the old ballad of the Children in the Wood. However it be, I do not know, I say, why this prejudice, well improved and carried as far as it go, might not be made to conduce to the preservation of many innocent creatures, which would are now exposed to all the

wantonness of an ignorant barbarity.

There are other animals that have the misfortune, for no manner of reason, to be treated as common enemies wherever found. The conceit that a cat has nine lives, has cost at least nine lives in ten of the whole race of them. Scarce a boy in the streets but has in this point outdone Hercules himself, who was famous for killing a monster that had but three lives. Whether the unaccountable animosity against this useful domestic may be any cause of the general persecution of owls (who are a sort of feathered cats), or whether it be only an unreasonable pique the moderns have taken to a serious countenance, I shall not determine. Though I am inclined to believe the former; since I observe the sole reason alledged for the destruction of frogs, is because they are like toads. Yet amidst all the misfortunes of these unfriended creatures, it is some happiness that we have not yet taken a fancy to eat them: for should our countrymen refine upon the French never so little, it is not to be conceived to what unheard of torments owls, cats, and frogs may be yet reserved.

When we grow up to men, we have another succession of sanguinary sports; in particular hunting. I dare not attack a diversion which has such authority and custom to support it; but must have leave to be of opinion, that the agitation of that exercise, with the example and number of the chasers, not a little contribute to resist those checks, which compassion would naturally suggest in behalf of the animal pursued. Nor shall I say with monsieur Fleury, that this sport is a remain of the Gothic barbarity. But I must animadvert upon a certain custom yet in use with and barbarous enough to be derived from the Goths, or even the Scythians; I mean that savage compliment our huntsmen pass upon ladies of quality, who are present at the death of a stag, when they put the knife in their hands to cut the throat of a helpless, trembling and weeping creature.

—That lies beneath the knife,
Looks up, and from her butcher begs her life.'

But if our sports are destructive, our gluttony is more so, and in a more inhuman manner. Lobsters roasted alive, pigs whipt to death, fowls sewed up, are testimonies of our outrageous luxury. Those who (as Seneca expresses it) divide their lives betwixt an anxious conscience and a nauseated stomach , have a just reward of their gluttony in the diseases it brings with it; for human savages, like other wild beasts, find snares and poison in the provisions of life, and are allured by their appetite to their destruction. I know nothing more shocking or horrid than the prospect of one of their kitchens covered with blood, and filled with the cries of creatures expiring in tortures. It gives one an image of a giant's den in a romance, bestrew'd with the scattered heads and mangled limbs of those who were slain by his cruelty.

The excellent Plutarch (who has more strokes of good-nature in his writings than I remember in any author) cites a saying of Cato to this effect, That it is no easy talk to preach to the belly, which has no ears. "Yet if," says he, "we are ashamed to be so out of fashion as not to offend, let us at least offend with some discretion and measure. If we kill an animal for our provision, let us do it with the meltings of compassion, and without tormenting it. Let us consider, that it is in its own nature cruelty to put a living creature to death; we at least destroy a soul that has sense and perception." In the life of

Cato the Censor, he takes occasion from the severe disposition of that man to discourse in this manner: "It ought to be esteemed a happiness to mankind, that our humanity has a wider sphere to exert itself in than bare justice. It is no more than the obligation of our very birth to practise equity to our own kind; that humanity may be extended through the whole order of creatures, even to the meanest. Such actions of charity are the overflowings of a mild good-nature on all below us. It is certainly the part of a well natured man to take care of his horses and dogs, not only in expectation of their labour while they are foals and whelps, but even when their old age has made them incapable of service."

History tells us of a wise and polite nation that rejected a person of the first quality, who stood for a judiciary office, only because he had been observed in his youth to take pleasure in tearing and murdering of birds. And of another that expelled a man out of the Senate, for dashing a bird against the ground which had taken shelter in his bosom.

Every one knows how remarkable the Turks are for their humanity in this kind. I remember an Arabian author, who has written a treatise to show, how far a man supposed to have subsisted in a desert island, without any instruction, or so much as the sight of any other man, may, by the pure light of nature, attain the knowledge of philosophy and virtue. One of the first things he makes him observe is, that universal benevolence of nature in the protection and preservation of its creatures. In imitation of which the first act of virtue he thinks his self-taught philosopher would of course fall into is, to relieve and assist all the animals about him in their wants and distresses.

In Dryden's Ovid are some very tender and pathetic lines applicable to this occasion:

'The Sheep was sacrific'd on no pretence,
But meek and unresisting innocence.
A patient, useful creature, born to bear
The warm and woolly fleece, that cloth'd her murderer;
And daily to give down the milk she bred,
A tribute for the grass, on which she fed,
Living, both food and raiment she supplies,
And is of least advantage when she dies.
How did the toiling ox his death deserve;
A downright simple drudge, and born to serve?
O tyrant! with what justice canst thou hope
The promise of the year, a plenteous crop;
When thou destroy'st thy lab'ring steer, who till'd,
And plough'd with pains, thy else ungrateful field!
From his yet reeking neck to draw the yoke,
That neck, with which the surly clods he broke:
And to the hatchet yield thy husbandman,
Who finish'd autumn, and the spring began?

....
What more advance can mortals make in sin

So near perfection, who with blood began?
Deaf to the calf that lies beneath the knife,
Looks up, and from her butcher begs her life:
Deaf to the harmless kid, that, ere he dies,
All methods to secure thy mercy tries,
And imitates in vain the children's cries.'

Perhaps that voice or cry so nearly resembling the human, with which Providence has endued so many different animals, might purposely be given them to move our pity, and prevent those cruelties we are too apt to inflict on our fellow creatures.

The Pennsylvania Packet and General Advertiser (PA) 1772 05 11 page 1 supplement. A Morning Hymn by S___

Song of Solomon, II 12, 13.

The flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come. The vines give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.

Arise, my love, and come away—
Birds proclaim the new-born day;
Each grove with acclamations rings
To God, the mighty King of kings.
  See the songsters of the air,
    The fishes of the sea,
  The flowers that deck the garden fair,
    Breathe glory, Lord, to thee!

Come, my fair one, let us rove,
To contemplate his heavenly love!
Hark! All nature seems to cry—
Glory be to God on high!
  See the songsters, &c….

The Essex Gazette (MA) 1772 05 26 page 3. Advertisement. Wanted this Week,

Two flying squirrels, that will feed well, and are tame; two humming birds, one pair of wood ducks, cock and hen. Any price will be given for them. Enquire of the printers.

The Massachusetts Gazette and Boston Post-Boy and the Advertiser (MA) 1772 07 27 page 2 The human mind scarce ever consistent with itself, in regard to the objects of desire.

…I…took it into my head one afternoon to envy a poor man who was hard at work for his livelihood mending the roof of a church, where he had some danger as well as toil. I, who had been seeking out the coolest shade, and reclining on the greenest turf, amidst the fragrance of thousand flowers; I, who had the leisure to attend to the

warbling of birds around me, or in peace and safety might amuse myself with the liveliest wit and eloquence of Greece and Rome, would have resigned all these delights with joy, to sit whistling at the top of a high ladder, suffering both heat and hunger….

The Boston Gazette and Country Journal (MA) 1772 08 24 page 3 Advertisement. Henry Howell Williams

> Having suffered very greatly by gunners coming on Noddles-Island after birds, they bringing on dogs, and driving my stock from one end of the island to the other, and often wounding and destroying my sheep, as also trampling down the grass, etc, to my very great damage.—These are therefore to forbid all persons whatever coming on the said island, as they may depend upon being prosecuted for trespassing and other misdemeanors according to law.

1773

The Massachusetts Gazette and the Boston Weekly News-Letter (MA) 1773 04 01 page 3 Boston, April 1, 1773.

...It being the season for young persons to go into the neighboring towns to kill small birds; it is requested they would be careful of their fire-arms—accidents often happening by guns going off when getting over walls, fences, etc.—It is also desired they would not fire near the roads where carriages are often passing: people riding out, especially women, have lately been endangered by the report of the guns frightening their horses, and the firing of shot across the roads....

The Virginia Gazette 1773 04 29 page 4 The Independent Farmer

> See where the Farmer, with a Master's eye,
> Surveys his little Kingdom, and exults
> In sovereign Independence. At a word,
> His feathery subjects in obedience flock
> Around his feeding hand; who, in return,
> Yield a delicious tribute to his board,
> And o'er his couch their downy plumage spread.
> The peacock here expands his eyeful plumes,
> A glittering pageant to the mid-day sun,
> In the stiff awkwardness of foolish pride.
> The swelling turkey apes his stately step,
> And calls the bristling feathers round his head.
> There the loud herald of the morning struts
> Before his sacking dames, the passive slaves
> Of his promiscuous pleasure. O'er the pond,
> See the gray gander, with his female train,
> Bending their lofty necks; and gabbling ducks,
> Rejoicing on the surface, clap their wings;
> Whilst, wheeling round in airy wanton flights,

The glossy pigeons chase their sportive loves,
Or is soft cooing tell their amorous tale
…
Peace and contentment, with their guardian wings,
Enclose his nightly slumbers. Rosy health,
When the gay lark's sweet matin wakes the morn,
Treads in his dewy footsteps around the field;
And cheerfulness attends his closing day.
…
His only enemies the prowling fox,
Whose nightly murders thin the bleating fold;
The hardy badger; the rapacious kite,
With eye malignant on the little brood.
Sailing around portentous; the rank stork
Thirsting, ah, savage thirst! For harmless blood;
The corn-devouring partridge; timorous hare
…
These all his foes, and these, alas! compar'd
With man to man, an inoffensive train.
'Gainst these, assisted by th' entangling net,
Th' explosive thunder of the levell'd tube,
…
The scenes of innocence and calm delight.
There the wild melody of warbling birds,
And cool refreshing groves, and murmuring springs,
Invite to sacred thought, and lift the mind
From low pursuits to meditate the God!

The New-London Gazette (CT) 1773 06 04 page 4 For the encouragement of vocal music by I.T.

Shall birds their sweetest notes assume
  To their creator's praise!
And shall not mortals dare presume
  A nobler song to raise!

Oh! tune my voice celestial dove,
  strike some nobler sound;
Inspire my voice with sacred love,
  To spread thy praises round.

These creatures sing thy Providence,
  And know no other song;
But I'll proclaim thy sovereign grace,
  The purchase of thy Son.

Now shall the angels be my guide,

To teach me what to sing,
Glory to God, who reigns on high,
To God my heavenly King.

1774

The Virginia Gazette (VA) 1774 03 24 page 2 Extract of a letter from Gosport, January 13

...Saturday, as two young men, brothers, named Burden, who live in Norris's Street, Ratcliff Highway, were out a-shooting in Stepney Fields, a quarrel arose concerning a small bird one of them shot, when the youngest discharged his piece at his brother, and wounded him in so terrible manner that he now lies past hope of recovery....

1775

The Boston Gazette and Country Journal (MA) 1775 10 16 page 4

The following poem was wrote by I.F. Esq; May, 1770, when he bid adieu to the busy scenes of life, and retreated to the shady groves and purling streams; and tho' he is now in the camp, nothing but the distressed circumstances of his bleeding country, could have called him from his delightful habitation, a seat so friendly to the Muses, near the border of pleasant mountains, which is a beautiful emblem of the ancient Parnassus, where the graces fixed their abode.

No more court nor martial themes
Delight me like the verdant groves,
Where I concert my rural schemes,
Midst singing birds, and cooing doves.
These sylvan songsters tuneful lays,
In innocence and free from fear,
So smoothly haunted on green sprays,
Both sooth my mind and charm my ear.
I would not change these rural scenes,
For what in court is to be found;
Nor quit the groves and purling streams,
For higher rank or hostile ground.
But thus retir'd, I'll spend my day
In vocal songs to God on high;
Joining the birds sweet warbling lays,
In praise of Heaven's majesty.
And when from hence I take my flight,
My sins oh! God thro' Christ forgive,
And call me to the realms of light,
In endless peace and bliss to live.

1776

The Pennsylvania Ledger: Or the Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania & New-Jersey Weekly Advertiser 1776 03 02 page 4 Verses written to a lady, enclosing two tickets for Mr. Cox's Museum[25]

You have read, my dear Madam of wonderful sights
In French Fairy Tales and th' Arabian nights;
Where of palaces splendid pavilions of gold,
And vases of agate and amber we're told;
Of fine glittering chariots, drawn by gilt dragons,
And elephants drawing as find broad wheeled wagons;
Of blue birds that flutter—and warble in cages
By magical art kept alive for whole ages;
Of pearl dropping linnets and gem breeding caskets;
Of rose diamond fountains, and brilliants in baskets;
Of emeralds, rubies, and sapphires so bright,
That they rivall'd the stars with their lustre and light;
So greatly romantic, indeed what's related,
We think the fine things all by fancy created;
But of King-street's magnificent sight take a view,
And you'll own the strange stories are probably true,
For they're realized all, as you'll say when you see'em,
In Cox's superb and surprising Museum.
Inclosed are the passports, take bell in your hand,
And feast on the wonders of this Fairy Land.

Endnotes

1 *News-Letter* issue dated and indexed as 1712. Passage (uncredited) taken from *A Compleat History of Europe: or, A View of the Affairs thereof, Civil and Military for The Year 1712*.

2 *Fables, Moral and Political, with large Explications* by Pieter de la Court, translated from the Dutch, this except taken from *The London Journal*. Pieter de la Court explains thus: "And these were the reasons why the wise Eastern nations of old, who lived for the most part under tyrants and usurpers, whom they feared to irritate and offend, that they might not subject themselves to the last of their fury, were obliged to instruct men in the truth and usefulness of human affairs, to excite them to virtue, and deter them from vice, by inventing and writing fictitious stories, apologues, comparisons, parables and fables, to the end that they might, with safety to themselves, at once both teach and delight mankind…That the nature and essence of all fables consists in this; that they relate things wholly incredible, by putting words in the mouths of beasts, and making plants, and other mute and speechless creatures speak: what they are made to say, nevertheless, ought not to exceed the capacity of men of common understanding; but the whole fable ought to be related in such common and general circumstances, that every reader may readily make the comparison between those images and himself, or other men; and easily, whenever and according as he pleases, apply them to his own affairs, or those of others… The fables of the ancients…made use of this merry way of telling the truth, that we might the more easily imprint, and the longer retain in our memories the instructions, which they gave us in this laughing manner, only to make them more agreeable to us…And let the reader, whoever he be, know besides, that it would be the highest step of injustice and tyranny, not to permit any fables to be mythologized, and made public, when they are only generally explained and that explication of them is confirmed by examples, taken from former ages.

Bird-related fables explicated in the collection include: Part I: "The Diver and the Land-Fowl," "The Doves and the Net," "The Eagle, the Peacock and the Parrot," "The Falcon and her Conscience," "The Goose and the Parrot," "The Lark and her Young Ones," "The Magpie, the Fowler, and the Fowl," "The Nightingale and the Cuckoo;" "The Nightingale and the Swallow; "The Raven and the Serpent;" "The Spiders, Flies, and Swallows," "The Stork and the Apothecary;" "The Swallows and the Singing-Birds;" "The Thistle-finch and her master;" and Part II: "The Crocodiles and the Wrens," "The Fox, the Raven, and the Dove," "The Trumpeter and the Flitter-mouse," "The Land-fowl and the Water-fowl," "The Bird-Catcher and the Bird," "The Man and the Eagle," "The Peasants, with their hens, ducks, pigeons and bees," "The Crows and other Birds," "The Eagle and the Fox," "The Fox and the Crane," "The Vulture and her Birthday Feast."

3 "The Swallows and the Singing-Birds" from Roger L'estrange's edition of Aesop's Fables. Fontaine's translation first appeared in 1668, interpreted into English by L'Estrange (this is a revised edition) in 1694.

4 This is the first appearance of the mockingbird, though it is the tropical species that is referenced.

5 The Gazette issue is dated May 13 to May 20. I've chosen to use the later date as the item date for subsequent weekly examples.

6 This poem is commonly read in eco-critical circles; Lemay (1968) suggests it was considered the one of the finest American poem of the era. It was first printed in the *Maryland Gazette* (issues from 1731 are not available digitally) and reprinted in British periodicals. Lemay notes that this poem was "carried in the pockets of sensitive tourists in Maryland" but ridiculed by Alexander Pope. (Lemay, J.A.L. (1968) Richard Lews and Augustan American Poetry, *PMLA*

LXXXIII, 80-101).

7 Lemay (1968) claims that this poem is by Richard Lewis, originally titled "Food for Criticks" appearing in the *Maryland Gazette* in early 1731.

8 This line was changed by both the *New England Weekly Journal* and *Pennsylvania Gazette* to reflect local scenery.

The *Pennsylvania Gazette* (1732 07 17) version was changed to:

Of ancient streams presume no more to tell
The famed Castalian or Pierian well
SKUYLKIL superior, must those springs confess,
As Pennsylvania yields to Rome or Greece…
Young Philadelphians know they pleasures well,

9 "Les oiseaux de Psaphon" is a French proverb, glossed in Diderot's Encyclopedia. Aelian includes a similar story about Hanno.

10 This is article is a reaction to an excerpt from *The Craftsman* about the Peter Zenger libel trial published in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* (April 6, 1738)

11 The book's full title is "A Philosophical Amusement upon the Language of Beasts" written in French by Father Guillaume-Hycinthe Bougeant, a famous Jesuit, now confined at La Flèche on account of this work. 1740 is the second, corrected edition. The original title is *Amusement philosophique, sur le language des bestes*, published in 1737. It is an early treatise about animal communication.

"Birds sing, they say: But this is a mistake. Birds do not sing, but speak: What we take for singing is no more than their natural language. Do the magpie, the jay, the raven, the owl, and the duck sing? What makes us believe that they sing is their tuneful voice. Thus the Hottentots in Africa seem to cluck like turkey-cocks tho' it be the natural accent of their language, and thus several nations seem to us to sing, when they indeed speak. Birds, if you will, sing in the same sense; but they sing not for singing's sake, as we fancy they do. Their singing is always an intended speech; and it is comical enough that there should be thus in the world so numerous a nation, which never speak otherwise but tunably and musically. But in short, what do these birds say? The question should be proposed to Apollinus Tyanaeous, who boasted of understanding their language. As for me, who am no diviner, I can give you no more than probable conjectures.... (p. 45) (see Malcolm Hay (2024) Other Perspectives: The Representation of Animals in the Poetry of Thomson, Smart, Cowper and Burns. A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, U of Oxford.

12 The Jacobite uprising of 1745 was attempt by Charles Edward Stuart to regain the British throne. Reference to "birds of ill omen" related to Jacobites (Jeffersonism) would be identified as storm-petrels (Mother Carey's chickens) later in the century.

13 Reprinted in the *The Boston Evening-Post* 1750 01 15 page 1 but ends after " But the ravens, crows, pyes, and other birds of that kind, have devoured great quantities of them," without the "drop in the bucket" comment, presenting a more positive view of bird usefulness.

14 Possibly a Dalmatian Pelican. While the capture and/or shooting of eagles received the most newspaper coverage, pelicans were also surprisingly common news items.

15 This is probably Eleazar Albin (1731) *A Natural History of Birds*.

16 Coote apparently published earlier under "Art of Shooting Flying."

17 Thomas Gordon 1735 *The Humorist* vol2. The same author wrote the anti-cruelty essay, "Of Luxury"

18 Book review, *London Chronicle,* April 1

19 The allusion is to letter from a gentleman at Leicester published on July 16, 1759 that described a rare New England tornado.

20 See *The Boston News-Letter* (MA) 1720 03 17

21 See similar episode reported in the *New-England Courant* 1723 07 22.

22 Wilkes had been imprisoned as a radical.

23 This is the first appearance of this trope, usually attributed to Addison.

24 By Alexander Pope, uncredited. *The Guardian*, 1713 05 21.

25 Mr. Cox's Museum was at Spring Gardens, Charing-Cross in London.